JSGS 892 – MPA Capstone Class

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN CAMPUS	
INSTRUCTOR:	Alastair MacFadden
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DROP-IN HOURS:	Fridays 2-3pm or by appointment
OFFICE LOCATION:	DIEF 143
TERM/SEMESTER:	Term 1, Fall 2022
ROOM:	DIEF 137 (Prairie Room)
DATE AND TIME:	**Mandatory class Tuesday September 6 from 9:00am 12:00pm** Class Workshops Tuesdays 9:00am 11:00am ***No class November 8 or December 6*** Students will be scheduled to deliver their Capstone presentations individually from December 7-16 between 9:00am and 4:00pm

The syllabus for this course is comprised of this document and a companion document titled "JSGS Common Syllabus 2022-23."

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

This course requires the development, submission, presentation and validation of a capstone report and presentation at the end of the student's MPA program. The Capstone Project provides students the opportunity to apply the theory and practice gained in the MPA program to a policy/management problem that was chosen in consultation with the JSGS 891 course instructor.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to help students leverage their MPA to achieve their career goals. The class allows students to synthesize and demonstrate the knowledge and competencies developed in the MPA program and other life experiences. Students will sharpen their career management skills to help them realize the full value of their MPA.

By the end of the course, active participants in this class will have the skills necessary to conduct an effective job search, and a professional portfolio that showcases their best work and their unique career identity. In addition to the professional portfolio, all students must complete a capstone project that consists of a research report and presentation. The capstone project will demonstrate the student's understanding and ability to find, assess, use, and recommend "the best" evidence applicable to a public policy issue. An understanding of relevant public policy institutions, democratic processes,

organizational environments, and an ability to communicate in a clear and professional manner are required elements of the capstone project.

Objectives of the class are to:

- Help students connect their education to what they want to achieve in their personal and professional lives.
- Facilitate understanding of their career identity, and why, how and with whom they will work as they advance in their career.
- Enable career growth for a diverse student population, including those who think they know their next steps and those who are still figuring that out.
- Develop a professional portfolio that collates evidence of their learning, skills, and experience.
- Produce a capstone project (report and presentation) on an area of policy interest that demonstrates proficiency in each MPA competency area.

COURSE CONTENT AND APPROACH

This is a required course for all MPA students and is taken in the last semester of a student's MPA program. The class allows students to exercise their skills as reflective practitioners, including the skills required to use research to improve the practice of public administration, and the career management skills to enable lifelong learning and growth. This class is designed to help students consolidate their thinking about public administration and apply it to their career path.

Assignments will integrate the student's learning and professional identity. Students will reflect on their MPA experience and associate it with their career aspirations. Assignments will reveal insight into the knowledge, skills and competencies required for leaders in public administration and provide evidence to show that the student has acquired these attributes.

This course activities are self-directed and highly experiential. Students will complete two major assignments: 1) a capstone project (a short report and presentation) where they reflect on, synthesize, and apply what they have learned from their MPA experience; and 2) a professional portfolio to support their career advancement. The schedule below enables students to accumulate the required sections of these final assignments by completing small milestone projects during the term.

Workshop sessions will help students develop their professional portfolio and career management skills. They will offer guidance and dedicated time to work on required elements of the final assignments. Topics will include an exploration of personal skills and strengths, writing resumes and cover letters, job search skills, labour market information, interview skills and informational interviewing. Students will support discussion in these sessions through a Web Safari, as described below under course format.

Capstone projects will focus on a specific policy/management issue that is of interest to the student. Students may choose a topic for their capstone project that they have focused on already during the MPA program or a topic associated with their career ambition, and/or volunteer, life and work experience. Capstone projects may build upon a previous MPA assignment(s) if it is relevant and demonstrates competence in the areas listed below:

- **Evidence and Strategic Thinking** – develops and applies an evidence-informed approach to policy issues and policy options.

- **Connection and Collaboration** –communication with different audiences to build relationships and harness a diversity of perspectives to gain understanding, design, and advance policy solutions.
- **Implementation and Improvement** – lead self, teams, and partners to implement policy decisions, manage change initiatives, monitor progress, and support continuous improvement.

COURSE FORMAT

JSGS students have told us they prefer in-person instruction. That is why we are pleased to offer this course in person and on-site according to the latest protocols for health and safety at the University of Saskatchewan. Please refer to this health and safety information so that you are prepared for a great experience on campus.

This course is designed for participation in real time (also known as synchronous instruction). Scheduled classes complement learning material found on PAWS. Please review the learning material in advance of each scheduled class. Your regular attendance in class offers the best opportunity to ask questions, make connections, and participate in learning based on the learning material.

Students are encouraged to bring a laptop or other wifi-enabled mobile device to class. This will enhance your experience by giving you access to online tools that allow classroom polls, surveys, and other collaboration tools that we may use this term.

Web Safari

We are going to collectively build a repository of news stories, articles, videos, blog posts, and other web-accessible resources related to each of the workshop themes and content. Students will choose two workshop themes and find a useful, related resource. The sign-up sheet is found in Canvas. Students will post a link to their resource on Canvas along with the title of the resource, and a 2-3 sentence description of why it is interesting and important. Posts are due at 1 pm on the Monday of each course week. The students who've made a post that week must give the class a 5-minute summary of the material, including one presentation slide that summarizes the main points. The presentation is meant to be very brief and informal. For more information on the learning objectives behind this exercise, see "The Web Safari: Connecting Theory to Practice Through Student-Led Discovery of Contemporary Material."

REQUIRED READINGS

There is no required textbook. Students can expect readings and links to accompany classroom activities. These resources and related exercises will support the development of each student's unique professional portfolio. See above for the description of our Web Safari to support peer learning in workshops.

COURSE OUTLINE

Each student must prepare an individualized portfolio and capstone project. The schedule below breaks down the assignments into specific tasks to be completed during the term.

All students must attend a required seminar on September 6. The instructor will also host workshops each week to support progress on major assignments.

Below are target dates for students to complete key elements of their portfolio and Capstone project:

Week	Date	Task
1	**REQUIRED SEMINAR** **September 6**	**Workshop Topic: Your career as your life story.** Course overview *Capstone Project* – Consultation with instructor to choose your Capstone topic. *Portfolio* – Choose a job you'd like to pursue and find an electronic version of a job advertisement for your portfolio. Draft 1 of letter to yourself.
2	September 13	**Workshop Topic: Skills, abilities, and traits** Web Safari Canvas Posts due Monday September 12 at 1pm. *Capstone Project* - Finalize capstone concept and outline. Define context for the opportunity or issue that is being described. What is it? Why does it matter? How is it being addressed and by whom? *Portfolio* – Complete your cover page
3	September 20	**Workshop Topic: Networking and informational interviews** Web Safari Canvas Posts due Monday September 19 at 1pm. *Capstone Project* – Consult rubric and identify required information, and sources *Portfolio* – Prepare questions and schedule two informational interviews (complete interviews before November 22)
4	September 27	**Workshop Topic: Resumes and LinkedIn Profile** Web Safari Canvas Posts due Monday September 26 at 1pm. *Capstone Project* – Information gathering and writing *Portfolio* – Work on detailed resume and LinkedIn Profile
5	October 4	**Workshop Topic: Cover letters** Web Safari Canvas Posts due Monday October 3 at 1pm. *Capstone Project* – Information gathering and writing *Portfolio* – Complete your detailed resume and LinkedIn Profile
6	October 11	**Workshop Topic: Interview skills** Web Safari Canvas Posts due Monday October 10 at 1pm. *Capstone Project* – First draft of Capstone Report 50% complete (2 of 4 pages!) *Portfolio* – Compete Education Section
7	October 18	**NO CLASS. EACH STUDENT HAS 15 MINUTE INTERVIEW WITH INSTRUCTOR DURING CLASS TIME** *Capstone Project* – First draft of Capstone Report 100% complete and submitted for comments **no later than October 21 at 11:59pm** *Portfolio* – Complete cover letter. Develop list of references (and confirm that those people are prepared to give good references).

8	October 25	**Workshop Topic: Meaning of work and future work skills.** *Capstone Project* – Review rubric and address feedback and gaps in content. *Portfolio* – Complete short version of resume targeted to your target job.
9	November 1	**Workshop Topic: Mission statement and artifacts.** Feedback on first draft of Capstone projects, and how to structure final presentations. Web Safari Canvas Posts due Monday October 31 at 1pm *Capstone Project* – Prepare draft of Capstone presentation. *Portfolio* – Create personal mission statement and gather artifacts.
	November 8	**NO CLASS**
10	November 15	**Workshop Topic: Career happenstance and workplace success.** Question and answer session about assignments. Web Safari Canvas Posts due Monday November 14 at 1pm Capstone Project – Review rubric and address gaps Portfolio – Review rubric and address gaps
11	November 22	**Workshop Topic: Lifelong learning**. Discuss results of informational interviews. Draft 2 of letter to yourself. Web Safari Canvas Posts due Monday November 21 at 1pm *Capstone Project* – Final draft *Portfolio* – Final draft
12	November 29	**Workshop Topic: Capstone Presentation - Practice Session** **Submit portfolio and Capstone report December 6 11:59pm**
	December 6	**NO CLASS**
	December 7 - 16	Individual capstone presentations between 9:00am and 4:00pm

ASSIGNMENTS

To successfully complete the course, students in JSGS 892 must complete the following:

1. **Professional Portfolio.** A portfolio is a presentation of your professional identity, including your background, your expertise, and interests, and key artifacts related to your education and experience. It helps you showcase and demonstrate your competencies to prospective employers, community groups, boards or a wider audience. The portfolio will be prepared in an electronic format with multiple sections. See hyperlink for detailed requirements.

   The portfolio is to be submitted by December 6 at 11:59pm.

2. **Capstone Report.** The capstone report will explore a specific policy/management issue chosen by the student and will demonstrate evidence that the student has acquired the 3 major competencies associated with the MPA (evidence, politics and democracy, and policy delivery).

It will be prepared to resemble an information item that a public servant would prepare for consideration by Cabinet or a Cabinet committee. See hyperlink for detailed requirements.

The **first draft of the Capstone Report is due no later than October 21 at 11:59pm**. Students will receive feedback on this draft **November 1**. Students are to use these comments to improve their report before making their **final submission to the instructor on December 6 at 11:59pm**.

3. **Capstone Presentation.** Deliver a 15-minute presentation to a panel that can consist of public service professionals, professors, and alumni. Students will receive feedback and answer questions from the panelists immediately following their presentation. See hyperlink for detailed requirements. **Final presentations to take place December 7-19.**

EVALUATION

This course is graded on a Pass/Fail basis. To pass the course, students must participate in class activities, including self- and peer assessments, and submit all assignments and earn an overall grade of Pass.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will not be accepted without making prior arrangements with the instructor.

ENROLLMENT

Class enrollment will be normally limited to 30 students.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This course has been developed with contributions from Candy Ho, Jamie Mayoh-Bauche, Kurtis Boyer, Bruno Dupeyron, Glenna Dureau-Sargsyan, Martin Boucher, Justin Longo, Ken Rasmussen, Chris Gunter, and Elizabeth Schwartz.