LOCATION AND MEETING TIME:

Room: HHH-15
Time: Tuesdays, 6:00p.m – 8:45p.m. (5 September – 12 December)

INSTRUCTOR INFO:

Diana Beck – beckd@umn.edu
Office Hours: as arranged (location, TBD)

COURSE SUMMARY:

Capstone is learning in action. It provides students with both a critical learning experience and an opportunity to perform a public service.

Students work in teams to address challenges, solve problems and identify opportunities for a client organization. Students will design the approach, conduct the data collection and analysis, and present findings (both orally and in writing) to the client.

Capstone builds on students’ previous coursework and expertise, while also enhancing student learning on policy and management issues, key process skills and research skills. Capstone requires students to interweave their learning and to do so in real time, in an unpredictable and complex real-world environment. Although divided into teams, the class will work as a learning community dedicated to the success of all the projects.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Capstone integrates and enhances learning in several arenas: a content or issue area, process skills including project, client and team management, and research methods for gathering, analyzing and reporting data. The specific learning objectives are:

A. CONTENT

Students should:
• understand the policy context for their project;
• be aware of critical research related to their content area;
• be capable of positioning and evaluating their project within its broader policy context.
B. PROCESS
Overall, students should demonstrate a capacity for flexibility and resilience, as shown by adapting to changing and complex circumstances, balancing competing demands and accepting uncertainty and lack of clarity when necessary.

1. Project Management
Students should demonstrate the ability to:
   - assess the client organization and its environment;
   - frame and refine the problem presented by the client;
   - develop a work agreement with the client for the project;
   - develop an internal project work plan with timelines and deliverables;
   - monitor progress against the work agreement and work plan;
   - revise the work plan as necessary;
   - develop well-supported and realistic recommendations.

2. Client Management
Students should demonstrate the ability to:
   - develop and sustain their relationship with the client;
   - negotiate a work agreement with timelines and deliverables;
   - maintain regular and productive contact with the client;
   - solicit and integrate feedback on progress against the contract;
   - deliver a final product to the client’s satisfaction.

3. Team Management
Students should demonstrate the ability to:
   - understand group formation and development;
   - understand the importance of interpersonal dynamics and team norms;
   - create and periodically review their team contract;
   - develop clear roles for team members;
   - manage team assignments and accountability;
   - advocate points of view and negotiate differences of opinion;
   - solicit and offer feedback;
   - appreciate and learn from cultural differences.

C. RESEARCH
Students should demonstrate the ability to:
   - identify appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative data gathering and analysis methods for their particular project;
   - carry out data collection methods appropriate for their particular project;
   - situate their findings in the broader literature;
   - draw conclusions based on their findings;
   - effectively communicate their work both orally and in writing.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course requirements include:

- attendance and participation in class activities and team meetings;
- completion of assignments on time;
- participation in field work;
- participation in meetings with clients;
- participation in preparation and presentation of findings;
- reflection on your own performance as well as the performance of your teammates.

Recommended Reading: Bardach, E. (2012). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving.*

Required Readings: Posted on Moodle and listed below.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Topics / Activities</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| 9/5/2017 | • Introductions and orientation  
• Project selection | READING(S):  
- syllabus and review of client problem statements |
| 9/12/2017 | • Debrief Capstone prep workshop  
• Discuss reading(s)  
• Team meetings with instructor to refine MOA | READING(S):  
- Cut Me Some Slack (Sverdrup and Sheil)  
- Creating Value with Diverse Teams (DiStefano, Maznevski)  
DELIVERABLE(S):  
- Submit DRAFT MOA |
| 9/19/2017 | • Discuss reading(s)  
• Discuss client meetings  
• Team meetings with instructor | READING(S):  
- Organizations on the Couch Ch. 13 (Krantz, Gillmore)  
DELIVERABLE(S):  
-Meetings with clients to review “draft” MOA, obtain data, understand stakeholders, confirm contacts, and address questions  
--Submit REVISED MOA |
| 9/26/2017 | • Team exercise  
• Team meetings with instructor | DELIVERABLE(S):  
- FINAL MOA (signed) |
| 10/3/17 | • Discussion of challenges, progress  
• Team meetings with instructor | DELIVERABLE(S):  
- Submission of FIRST DRAFT PROJECT REPORT to instructor: “skeleton” format to include headings, completed narrative for background/contextual setting, completed literature review, TOC |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Reading(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>10/10/2017</td>
<td>• Discuss reading(s)</td>
<td>READING(S):</td>
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<td>• Discussion of challenges, progress</td>
<td>- The White Researcher in the Multicultural Community (Krauss, Goldsamt, Bula, Sember)</td>
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<td>• Team meetings with instructor</td>
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<td>10/17/2017</td>
<td>• Discussion of challenges, progress</td>
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<td>• Team meetings with instructor</td>
<td>- 1st Peer Evaluation due to instructor</td>
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<td>10/24/2017</td>
<td>• Discussion of challenges, progress</td>
<td>DELIVERABLE(S):</td>
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<td>• Team meetings with instructor</td>
<td>- Submission of SECOND DRAFT PROJECT REPORT to instructor: revisions to previous draft and completed section on methodology</td>
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<td>10/31/2017</td>
<td>• Discussion of challenges, progress</td>
<td>READING(S):</td>
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<td>• Team meetings with instructor</td>
<td>- How Management Teams Can Have a Good Fight (Eisenhardt, Kathwajy, Bourgeois)</td>
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<td>11/7/2017</td>
<td>• Discuss reading(s)</td>
<td>READING(S):</td>
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<td>• Discussion of challenges, progress</td>
<td>- When Teammates Raise a White Flag (Mulvey, Viega, Elsass)</td>
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<td>11/14/2017</td>
<td>• Discussion of challenges, progress</td>
<td>DELIVERABLE(S):</td>
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<td>• Team meetings with instructor</td>
<td>- Reflection Paper</td>
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<td>11/21/2017</td>
<td>• Presentation of handout and slides to class for feedback</td>
<td>DELIVERABLE(S):</td>
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<td>- Submission of DRAFT FINAL PROJECT PAPER to instructor</td>
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<td>- Submission of handout and slides to client for review and feedback</td>
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<td>11/28/2017</td>
<td>• Presentation Rehearsals</td>
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<td>- Submission of final handout and slides to instructor</td>
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<td>- Submission of DRAFT FINAL PROJECT PAPER to client for review and feedback</td>
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<td>12/5/2017</td>
<td>• Instructor available for teams (attendance not required)</td>
<td>DELIVERABLE(S):</td>
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<td>- Final presentations conducted between 12/4-12/8</td>
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<td>12/12/2017</td>
<td>• Discussion of Client Presentations</td>
<td>DELIVERABLE(S):</td>
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<td>• Discuss submission of final Capstone paper to Digital Conservancy</td>
<td>- FINAL PROJECT PAPER due to instructor (be sure to incorporate client feedback into your final paper)</td>
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<td>- 2nd Peer Evaluation due to instructor</td>
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<td>- Self Evaluation due to instructor</td>
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**EVALUATION and GRADING**

Your grade will be based primarily on the quality of your team’s final report and presentation to your client. Peer evaluations will be used to help make judgments about individual contributions that will be used to determine individual grades. In addition, feedback from your community partners will be used to inform grades.
1. **Attendance, Participation, and Peer Evaluation (individual).** This includes preparing for class sessions, contributing to discussions and substantive learning, and engaging in case analysis and other exercises. You will complete 2 written “Peer Evaluations” designed to assess the contribution, understanding of your project, teamwork skills, and client relationship skills of each teammate.

2. **Reflection Analysis and Self Assessment (individual).** You will complete a written reflection response related to the application of learning to your Capstone experience. Specifically, in 2-3 pages, you will focus your reflection on the competing interests and considerations that have emerged from your findings and personal experiences, and how these are shaping your final recommendations. You will also be asked to submit a written evaluation of your role and contribution to your team.

3. **Final Presentation (team):** Each team will deliver a final oral presentation to the senior leaders (decision-makers) of the client organization during the week of December 4 – December 8, 2017. The presentation will summarize the problem/opportunity, methodology of the project’s research, analysis, findings, and recommendations. Your presentation grade will be assessed on adequate communication of findings, clarity in presenting the problem/opportunity and context, articulation of methodology and convincing description of analysis, evidence-based recommendations, and overall professionalism of the final presentation – including level of visual engagement, use of creativity, engagement and interaction with the audience, staying within time limit, and expression of enthusiasm/importance for the project. You will also prepare a handout to accompany your presentation.

4. **Final Product/Report: Due to Instructor by December 12, 2017 (team).** While the specifics of each project will vary, all will culminate with the preparation of a written product/report that includes a contextual description of the problem/opportunity faced by the client, as well as in-depth research, analysis, findings, and recommendations presented in a professional document. Draft elements of this paper will be due throughout the semester where you will receive ungraded feedback from the instructor. After receiving feedback from the instructor, students will share the final “draft” report with their client. After receiving client feedback, students will make final revisions and submit final products to the instructor for grading. After receiving a final grade, students will post the paper on the University of Minnesota’s Digital Conservancy. Criteria for grading the final written product will emphasize: Clarity of the problem/opportunity and logic of the research question(s) pursued, quality of analysis and relevance of the data sources, connection of the findings and recommendations to credible evidence derived from analysis, organization that presents information in a logical sequence and transitions smoothly from one paragraph/section to the next, and overall professionalism that consistently includes in-text citations and references, and is free from typographical and grammatical errors.
Grading Scenarios. These scenarios illustrate professional norms for assigning grades:

• “A” Scenario. A team defines a research question clearly; proceeds from a well written plan of work; communicates with the client regularly to ensure that the research remains relevant; executes original data collection (e.g., survey research, key informant interviews) or well defined secondary analyses of existing data; prepares final draft reports for review; revises and rewrites draft reports; and summarizes recommendations clearly in presentations. The team meets all deadlines, submits a final report that adds value to the client, provides new understanding of a problem or course of action, is well organized, includes no typographical errors, and includes appropriate citations and supporting material in appendixes. In addition, the team makes no errors of fact in its presentation or its report and bases all conclusions on evidence and sound logic. The final report presents a story that is clear, cogent, and persuasive.

• “B” Scenario. A team defines an ambitious research agenda; proceeds according to a well written plan of work; meets with the client regularly to ensure that the research remains relevant; executes original data collection (e.g., survey research, key informant interviews) or well defined secondary analyses of existing data; generally meets deadlines but runs out of time to revise and rewrite draft report; and submits a final report that is generally well written but still in draft form. The draft is imbalanced, for example, with more of the paper devoted to a literature review than to the analyses, more of the paper devoted to analyses than to conclusions and recommendations, or with results critical to conclusions buried in the appendix rather than in the body of the report without any textual reference to their location. Although the research may be excellent, these team members receive grades of B because it is evident the team ran out of time to polish the document, the final document isn’t accessible or easily interpreted, or the document includes typographical errors or inconsistencies in style. The final report may be serviceable, but the client must go to considerable effort to make use of the findings because the story it tells is not clear or cogent, the logic used to develop recommendations from analyses is not readily apparent, and the conclusions do not reflect the richness of the research and analyses completed during the semester.

• “B-C” Scenario. A team struggles to define its research agenda; fails to make the project a priority early in the semester; neglects to interact periodically with client to ensure that their research addresses priorities; undertakes parallel tasks but fails to use common protocols, thus making results incomparable; recognizes limitations of their research and works hard to salvage the report but runs out of time; and submits a final report that is clear and readable but really adds nothing of value to the client and does not extend knowledge of issue, problem, or process. Although the team may have put in many hours and worked hard, this team receives grades of B or C because the final product is of little value to the client. Members of teams that submit final reports that are incomplete, have sections still to be written, multiple typographical errors, or include text references that indicate more information is to be added will automatically receive grades of “C.”
• “C-D” Scenario. A team struggles to define its research agenda; agrees generally on a topic but is unable to agree or follow-through on approaches and methods of analysis; fails to meet periodically with the client to confirm direction of analyses; team is not cohesive and completes tasks independently; submits drafts of reports to clients independently with instructions to disregard previous submittals by other team members; submits a final report that includes questionable interpretations of data, different interpretations of comparable data in parallel sections, several different writing styles, typographical errors, and no references to materials in appendixes. Although individual team members may have worked very hard and put in many hours, the team receives grades of C or D because the final product does not meet professional standards.

Note that in these scenarios, grades are based on the quality of the final report and products, not on effort by individuals. Capstone students have complained in the past that they have “worked too hard to receive only a B.” We expect hard work, but the hard work is your input, not your collective output, and the grade is for your collective output and potential impact of your work as judged according to professional norms. If your team submits a report judged to be in the B-C or C-D categories, we may decline to forward it to the client. The reasons for this decision would be that we have concluded the report provides little added value to the client or that the report fails to meet professional standards.

It is common that individual grades will vary among team members. We have found that students are not hesitant to identify teammates who have failed to show initiative or complete assignments. The most common problem within teams that leads to significant variation in grades is the failure by individuals to do their fair share of the work. This problem generally stems from different priorities and commitment to the class and the project. Sometimes, individuals who have been pegged as free-riders by their teams have complained that they didn’t realize their team members felt they weren’t doing their fair share of the work. This is not an excuse that will mitigate adverse effects on your grade. As a professional, it is your individual responsibility to make sure that you fulfill your responsibilities.

Policy on Incomplete Grades:
You are expected to complete all course work by deadlines established in your scope of work and within the semester. Those who are unable to do so must negotiate an incomplete in advance of the due date and develop a written contract that describes the work that remains to be completed and the date by which the work will be submitted to the instructor.
For Your Information: Additional University of MN policies

**Academic Freedom and Responsibility**, for courses that involve students in research:

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom and conduct relevant research. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.* When conducting research, pertinent institutional approvals must be obtained and the research must be consistent with University policies. Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost.

*Language adapted from the American Association of University Professors "Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students".

**Scholastic Dishonesty:** You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. (Student Conduct Code: [http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf](http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf)) If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see: [http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/INSTRUCTORRESP.html](http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/INSTRUCTORRESP.html).

The Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity has compiled a useful list of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty: [http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html](http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html). If you have additional questions, please clarify with your instructor for the course. Your instructor can respond to your specific questions regarding what would constitute scholastic dishonesty in the context of a particular class-e.g., whether collaboration on assignments is permitted, requirements and methods for citing sources, if electronic aids are permitted or prohibited during an exam.
Disability Services: The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. Disability Services (DS) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact DS at 612-626-1333 to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations. If you are registered with DS and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, we encourage you to contact your instructor early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.

Sexual harassment: "Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf

Mental Health and Stress Management: As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating, and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu/. Remember that there are advisors in the Humphrey Student Services office who are trained and experienced counselors. They are available at very short notice to address any concerns you have and provide further resources within the University. Humphrey Student Services, HHH 280, 612-624-3800.

Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action: The University provides equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Equity_Diversity EO AA.pdf.

Additional U of M education policies can be found here: Please see http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/Syllabusrequirements_APPA.html for additional policy information.