



**PUB AFRS 4011**  
**Public Affairs Capstone**  
**3 Credit Hours**  
**Spring 2018**

**Time/Location:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:55pm to 5:15pm, Page Hall room #60

**Instructor:** Professor Stéphane Lavertu, PhD  
350Q Page Hall  
*Office Hours:* Wednesdays, 10:00-12:00pm,  
or by appointment (send email to [lavertu.1@osu.edu](mailto:lavertu.1@osu.edu))

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

The course serves as a capstone for the Glenn College's undergraduate degrees. It requires students to reflect on and integrate the knowledge and skills they have acquired while completing their degree coursework. This reflection and integration occurs in part through the completion of research projects in students' areas of interest and the presentation of the results of those projects via oral, written, and visual formats. Reflection and integration also occurs through short paper assignments and class discussions that help students understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens and professionals operating in the public and non-profit sectors.

**COURSE LEARNING GOALS**

Upon completion of the course, students should understand

- Their roles and responsibilities as citizens and as professionals in the public and non-profit sectors.
- How the knowledge and skills they have acquired during their studies fit together, as well as how they might apply what they have learned to careers in the public and non-profit sectors.

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to

- Apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired as they complete a practical research project in subject areas of interest to them.
- Communicate the results of their research effectively in written, oral, and visual formats.



## **DEGREE LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The course contributes to all Glenn College learning goals and objectives related to foundational knowledge in public affairs; competencies in management, leadership, and policy analysis; and developing an appreciation for multiple perspectives in public affairs. In particular, the course focuses on the following objectives at an advanced level:

- Students can integrate and apply knowledge gained in their area of specialization in public affairs (e.g. community organization).
- Students understand the role of citizenship and ethical public service in the democratic process.
- Students can define and address problems in the public and/or nonprofit sectors using analytical tools.
- Students can communicate effectively via written, oral, and electronic methods in public and/or nonprofit sectors.
- Students have an appreciation for the diversity and interdisciplinary nature of public affairs.
- Students have an appreciation for individual and group differences in perspectives, backgrounds, interests, and needs.

## **BASIS FOR ASSESSMENT**

Your grades will be based on the following items:

### ➤ **Reflection Essays (25%)**

You must write essays reflecting on core coursework you have completed as part of your degree programs. Each essay will focus on a particular topic (policy analysis and evaluation, management and leadership, public budgeting and finance, civic engagement and public service, or your area of specialization). Your essay must describe in detail a central lesson you gleaned from coursework on that topic (I will provide sample syllabuses to help refresh your memory), as well as how this lesson applies to your professional interests. You should dedicate half of the essay to each of these two components. The essays must be 1.5-2 double-spaced pages (using 12 point font and 1 inch margins) and are due by class time for the corresponding class discussion days. I will base half of your grade on the care with which you synthesize and apply lessons learned and the other half of your grade on the quality of the writing. Please consult the paper rubric in Appendix A for guidance on how I will assess writing quality. We will review exemplary responses from week 2 so that you have a clear idea of my expectations in subsequent weeks.



➤ **Participation (15%)**

The class is a seminar and, thus, requires your presence and participation. You will receive a participation grade for each class—one that will be based in part on your command of the assigned readings. I do not excuse absences, but I will drop the three lowest participation grades for students who complete an extra credit assignment during the first week of class.

➤ **Research Project (60%)**

A central purpose of this course is to ensure you are ready to step out into the professional world. That requires that you have a good command of your area of specialization, and that you are able to communicate this expertise in written, oral, and visual formats. The purpose of your research project is to help prepare you in all of these areas. You must write a 15-20 page research paper in your area of interest (preferably your area of specialization), as well as communicate its contents effectively in brief written, oral, and visual formats.

The main research paper can take many forms. For example, it can be a conventional policy analysis in which you compare policy options and make a recommendation for solving a public problem; a narrower research project focusing on one aspect of policy analysis (e.g., the description of a problem or a literature review, provided that there are clear policy implications); an evaluation examining the impact of a policy or program; or a research paper on a policy or management topic (e.g., social enterprises, pay for performance, etc.). The primary requirement is that your research project must involve a thoughtful, systematic, and deep analysis in your area of specialization.

You will complete the following components of the project as the semester progresses:

- Research Plan (5%)

You must submit your research plan during the second week of class. Your research plan should contain your carefully crafted research question, a specific plan for answering that question (your empirical strategy), an outline of your final paper (describing the various sections of the paper, including all of the components listed in Appendix A), and a timeline for executing each component of the paper. The research plan should be approximately two double-spaced pages (12 point font and one inch margins).

- Executive Summary (5%)

You must submit an executive summary of your project halfway through the semester (week 8). This exercise is meant to help you envision where you think your research is headed, as well as to serve as the basis for a writing workshop. I will provide very clear guidance on the content of the executive summary on Carmen.



- Draft Capstone Paper (10%)

The draft capstone paper should be 15-20 double-spaced pages using 12 point font (about 5,000 words). It should include all elements required of the final paper, including an executive summary; clear descriptions of the research questions, analytical approach (e.g., data and methods), and results; and a concluding synthesis and set of implications or recommendations. I will grade you based on the quality of the writing/presentation and analysis, as if it were the final paper (see rubric in Appendix A).

- Paper Brief (10%)

The brief is a 1-2 page synopsis of your paper. It is very similar to the executive summary, but it should be visually appealing and communicate the essential components of your research to someone who has but a moment to glance at the brief (e.g., using illustrations and text excerpts). I based half of your grade on content and the other half on writing/presentation. In addition to following the writing quality guidelines in Appendix A, you must follow the formatting guidelines we review in class (e.g., with regard to tables and figures).

- Presentation (10%)

The purpose of the presentation is to simulate the oral communication of information in a professional setting. The presentation should provide a brief yet engaging synopsis of your analysis in about 10 minutes (about 5 slides), including a 2 minute question-and-answer session. The rubric I will use to grade your presentations is in Appendix B.

- Final Capstone Paper (20%)

The capstone paper should be 15-20 double-spaced pages using 12 point font (about 5,000 words). It should include an executive summary; clear descriptions of the research questions, empirical strategy (i.e., data and methods), and results; and a concluding assessment or set of recommendations. Your grade will be based on the quality of the writing/presentation and analysis (see rubric in Appendix A).

## **GRADING**

A	93-100	C+	77-79.9	E <	59.9
A-	90-92.9	C	73-76.9		
B+	87-89.9	C-	70-72.9		
B	83-86.9	D+	67-69.9		
B-	80-82.9	D	60-66.9		



## TEXTS

Bardach, E., & Patashnick, E.M. (2015). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). CQ Press/Sage. [ISBN-13: 978-1483359465]

Strunk, W., & White, E.B. (2010). *The elements of style* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Oxford University Press. [ISBN-13: 978-0205309023]

Students can access textbook information via the Barnes & Noble bookstore website: [www.shopOhioState.com](http://www.shopOhioState.com) as well as from their BuckeyeLink Student Center. This information is disseminated by B&N to all area bookstores. You may buy from a store of your choice and/or shop for books online (always use ISBN# for searches).

## POLICIES FOR THIS COURSE

### Writing Assignments

Your written assignments should be your own original work. You should cite the ideas and words of your research sources. In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from another class, even if you modify it. If you want to build on past research or revisit a topic you have explored in other courses, please discuss the situation with me. Finally, please note that you are prohibited from falsifying research or results. All research you will conduct in this course is intended to be a learning experience; you should never feel tempted to make your results or your library research look more successful than it was.

### Formatting Requirements

I will specify formatting requirements for each assignment listed on Carmen. In general, you should use a Microsoft Word document, double-spacing, 1-inch margins, and 12-point font. Please include your name and page numbers. Please note that you must use APA formatting and style guidelines on all assignments.

### TurnItIn Feedback Studio

You will submit your assignments online via Carmen. Carmen uses the TurnItIn Feedback Studio, which scans your submission and compares your paper to other works (including your own) to determine how similar your paper is to other texts. OSU offers a list of best practices students may use when completing writing assignments:

<https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmencanvas/turnitin-feedback-studio>.

### Writing Assistance

The Writing Center provides writing assistance to undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff at Ohio State. Writing consultants can review writing at any stage and help with non-paper assignments such as presentations (see: <https://cstw.osu.edu/students>). Writing consultants are available by appointment, on a walk-in basis, or online.



## SCHEDULE

Below is the schedule of weekly topics, activities for Tuesday (Tues) and Thursday (Thurs) classes, and writing [W] and reading [R] assignments. Thursdays will typically involve an in-class workshop based on the assignments due that day. You must complete and submit assignments by the time class begins. For example, you must upload reflection essays to Carmen by class time on Tuesdays.

<b>Weekly Topics</b>	<b>Class Activities</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
Week 1: Overview	T (1/9): Overview of Class R (1/11): Project Workshop	Tues: No assignment Thurs: Curriculum Docs [R]
Week 2: Field of Public Affairs	T (1/16): Topic Discussion R (1/18): Research Plans	Tues: Sample Syllabus [R] Reflection Essay [W] Thurs: Research Plan [W]
Week 3: Public Service & Civic Engagement	T (1/23): Topic Discussion R (1/25): Public Affairs Writing	Tues: Sample Syllabus [R] Reflection Essay [W] Thurs: Strunk & White (all) [R]
Week 4: Policy Analysis & Evaluation	T (1/30): Topic Discussion R (2/1): Policy Analysis (I)	Tues: Sample Syllabus [R] Reflection Essay [W] Thurs: Bardach, Part I [R]
Week 5: Public Management & Leadership	T (2/6): Topic Discussion R (2/8): Policy Analysis (II)	Tues: Sample Syllabus [R] Reflection Essay [W] Thurs: Bardach, Part II [R]
Week 6: Public Budgeting & Finance	T (2/13): Topic Discussion R (2/15): Project Updates & Discussion	Tues: Sample Syllabus [R] Reflection Essay [W] Thurs: Be prepared to share
Week 7: Specializations	T (2/20): Topic Discussion R (2/22): Formatting and Style Guides	Tues: Reflection Essay [W] Thurs: Sample Reports; APA [R]
Week 8: Future of Public Affairs	T (2/27): Topic Discussion R (3/1): Executive Summaries	Tues: No Assignment Thurs: Executive Summary [W]
Week 9: Careers/Job Market	T (3/6): Lecture (Student Services) R (3/8): Letters & Resumes	Tues: No assignment Thurs: Letters & Resumes [W]
Spring Break	Spring Break	
Week 10: Practice Presentations	T (3/20): Presentations (peer evals) R (3/22): Presentations (peer evals)	Tues: Presentations Thurs: Presentations
Week 11: Project Workshops: Draft Paper	T (3/27): Peer Feedback R (3/29): Peer Feedback	Tues: Draft Paper [W] Thurs: Peer Feedback [R]
Week 12: Project Workshops: Policy Brief	T (4/3): Peer Feedback R (4/5): Peer Feedback	Tues: Policy Brief [W] Thurs: Revised Policy Brief [W]
Week 13: Presentations	T (4/10): Presentations (peer evals) R (4/12): Presentations (peer evals)	Tues: Presentations Thurs: Presentations
Week 14: Presentations & Goodbye	T (4/17): Presentations (peer evals) R (4/19): Presentations & Goodbye	Tues: Presentations Thurs: Presentations
Week 15: Paper Due (No class)	M (4/23): Paper Due	Final Paper Due 4/23, 5pm

**\*\*\*VERY IMPORTANT STATEMENTS BELOW\*\*\***



## **Glenn College Diversity**

The Glenn College is committed to nurturing a diverse and inclusive environment for our students, faculty, staff, and guests that celebrates the fundamental value and dignity of everyone by recognizing differences and supporting individuality. We are dedicated to creating a safe space and promoting civil discourse that acknowledges and embraces diverse perspectives on issues and challenges that affect our community.

## **Disability Accommodation Policy**

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

## **Mental Health**

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 a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the **Office of Student Life Counseling and Consultation Services (CCS)** by visiting [ccs.osu.edu](http://ccs.osu.edu) or calling 614-292- 5766. CCS is located on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Younklin Success Center and 10<sup>th</sup> Floor of Lincoln Tower.



You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614--292--5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1--800--273--TALK or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org). Also, the OSU Student Advocacy Center is a resource to help students navigate OSU and to resolve issues that they encounter at OSU – visit <http://advocacy.osu.edu/> .

## Academic Integrity

The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University’s [Code of Student Conduct](#) and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University’s Code of Student Conduct may constitute “Academic Misconduct.” Sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

In the Ohio State University’s [Code of Student Conduct](#), Section 3335-23-04 defines academic misconduct as: “Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process.” Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University’s [Code of Student Conduct](#) is never considered an “excuse” for academic misconduct.



## Appendix A: Requirements and Rubric for Final Capstone Paper

Grades for capstone papers based on content (50 points) and writing/presentation (50 points). Using the following rubrics, I will identify whether there are “major issues,” “minor issues,” or “no issues” with respect to each component. For example, if there are just a few grammatical mistakes throughout the paper, I would check “no issues” next to “grammar.” If there are a dozen or so mistakes but they are minor (e.g., using “effect” instead of “affect”), I would place a check next to “grammar.” However, if there are multiple grammatical errors per paragraph and it significantly undermines readability and the credibility of the report, I would select “major issues.” Students will receive a fraction of total possible points (on writing and content, respectively) based on the number of issues present:

Percent of Possible Points	Criteria
50	No issues
45	Multiple minor issues
40	At least one major issue or many minor issues
35	Multiple major issues
30 or below	Many major issues

Writing ( /50 points*)	No Issues	Minor Issues	Major Issues
(Grammar) Sentences are grammatically correct.			
(Organization) Sentences within paragraphs, paragraphs within sections, and sections within the paper are logically organized.			
(Professional) Writing is professional in style (e.g., avoids use of slang).			
(Objective) Points are made through the mobilization of evidence, as opposed to emotional appeals or the use of hyperbole.			
(Smooth) Sentences flow smoothly.			
(Concise) Sentences are not unnecessarily wordy.			
(Clear) The point or meaning of sentences is clear.			
(Precise) Words are chosen carefully to convey ideas precisely.			
(Substantiated) All claims that are not common knowledge are substantiated with citations from reputable sources.			
(Formatting) Formatting is logical, consistent, and follows APA guidelines (particularly for references).			
<i>*Note: Each category has equal weight</i>			



<b>Content ( /50 points*)</b>	<b>No Issues</b>	<b>Minor Issues</b>	<b>Major Issues</b>
<i>Introduction to the Problem/Issue/Topic</i>			
( <u>Importance</u> ) Presents the problem/issue/topic in a compelling manner, shown to be relevant and significant in scope and importance			
( <u>Precision</u> ) Defines clearly the problem/issue/topic and its nature and extent is bounded			
( <u>Relevant Grounding/Literature</u> ) Includes assessment of previous efforts to address problem/issue/topic, drawing on a critical review of relevant literature.			
<i>Analysis</i>			
( <u>Analytical Approach</u> ) Identifies and describes the analytical approach(es) taken			
( <u>Appropriateness</u> ) Uses appropriate method(s), theoretical approach(es), tool(s), framework(s) to inform the question at hand			
( <u>Limitations</u> ) Acknowledges the limitations of the analysis approach(es) used, and steps taken to address these limitations			
<i>Conclusion/Decision /Recommendations</i>			
( <u>Synthesis</u> ) Synthesizes findings and key points from the analysis			
( <u>Implications or Recommendations</u> ) Communicates specific, actionable implications related to the issue, or describes preferred alternatives or recommendations that follow directly from the analysis			
<i>*Note: Each category has equal weight</i>			



## Appendix B: Components of Presentation Grade

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
<u><i>Use of Slides</i></u> Not too much text, text is readable, focused on key points, etc.	/10
<u><i>Oral Communication</i></u> Easy to follow; clear and audible language (not too fast, clear explanation if any jargon used, etc.); answered questions graciously and effectively	/10
<u><i>Clear research question</i></u>	/5
<u><i>Clear analytical approach</i></u>	/5
<u><i>Clear presentation of results</i></u>	/5
<u><i>Clear concluding statement</i></u>	/5
<u><i>Followed directions</i></u> Used slides; sent slides ahead of time so that they can all be uploaded to the computer before class; completed the presentation within the allotted 10 minutes	/10
<b>Total</b>	<b>/50</b>