



JOHN GLENN

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Public Affairs 7960:

Capstone Seminar: Information Management

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30945
Time: Thursday 5:30 – 8:10 p.m.
Location: Page Hall 060

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BACKGROUND

Two of the most common solutions mentioned to most any government problem include: 1) finding an appropriate way for citizens to be engaged in government; and 2) using new information and communications technology (“ICT”) tools to improve communications and decision-making. This course will focus on the use of ICT to improve citizen engagement and decision-making.

We will explore these solutions through two sets of applied class projects that explore two of the most important elements in these solutions: 1) data and 2) participation. Citizen participation does not mean much if data is not provided. And providing better public data will not yield anything unless citizens can use it through appropriate participation mechanisms.

The first set of projects will examine the possibilities of using ICT to improve citizen engagement. We have two separate clients for this project: 1) The City of Westerville and 2) The City of Upper Arlington.

The second project will focus on how we collect and manage data for purposes of “Open Data” and “Big Data”. We are going to look at the collection, accessibility and use of health information. In particular, our client is the Business Analytics Division of the Department of Administrative Services, State of Ohio.

Students will be assigned to each of these three projects based upon interest and skills. Each group project is responsible for producing its own final product.

Given that the common elements of “data” and “participation” are important to both sets of projects, a portion of the class time will include commenting on, and giving help to other group projects. Another portion of the class time will typically involve one-on-one consultation between the instructors and the groups. The class will also discuss common readings relevant to all of the group projects.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of a JGSPA capstone course is to provide an opportunity to apply the skills and concepts acquired in the foundation courses to an applied problem.

The first goal of our capstone is to better understand how to improve citizen engagement with a particular focus on how ICT can contribute to that goal.

A second goal of our capstone course is for students to learn how to be successful consultants. This capstone course was designed as a consulting project in which students work with real clients who are expecting useful solutions to real problems. While most of our graduates will never work for a “consulting partnership”, learning how to be a consultant will enable you to provide “internal consulting” services within your own organization and also enable you to make better use of consultants when they are hired to provides services to you.

The final goal of our capstone course is to provide students with an in-depth experience of state and local government.

More specifically, the course objectives are to provide the student with:

Knowledge Skills

1. Understanding what “citizen engagement” means in the era of e-government including the varieties of ways that citizens can become engaged, when citizen

engagement is appropriate, the important factors in making citizen engagement work, and how to judge whether citizen engagement is working.

2. Understanding the most important e-government citizen engagement efforts now being developed including open data, “Big Data”, social media and other Web 2.0 technologies like citizen portals, citizen dashboards, neighborhood information systems, and mobile apps.

Through an environmental scan of the experiments now being conducted around the country, students will acquire state-of-the-art knowledge of the variety of the tools available and current best practices.

3. Revisiting and deepening the knowledge gained in foundation courses, in particular, the law, management, evaluation and statistics courses by applying that knowledge to a real problem.

Professional Skills

Students will have the opportunity to develop and improve important professional skills.

1. Professional communications are critical in any venue. This course will require students to develop or improve their writing, public speaking, interviewing, and professional correspondence skills.

2. “Being a professional” means working collaboratively in a positive way towards finding a solution to a problem despite the pressures to do otherwise.

You will find that successful consultants learn how to work and adapt to the rhythm and pace of the client’s needs and problems. Problem statements will be repeatedly redefined, data will be difficult to obtain, and scheduling interviews will require persistence.

Professional consultants also understand that the problems as presented by the client to the consultant are seldom neatly packaged and very often are redefined as more research is conducted. In fact, one of the most important services a professional brings to the contract is the important question of how to frame the problem. Finally, students will need to develop the skill of constantly asking each other, the instructor and the client, “where are we now and what is the most important thing we need to do next.”

3. Students will also learn the specific skills and tools that are important in developing a work-group product. This means learning how to keep track of what

work was done, when and what work needs to be done and how to integrate and coordinate your respective efforts.

Products

1. Students will leave the course with a professionally produced consulting product that will be a significant addition to their portfolio for future job searches or job advancement opportunities. The product focuses on an interesting, timely problem that is broadly applicable in many future venues.
2. Students will gain the satisfaction of knowing that they have spent their time working on a real, timely problem and produced a valuable product.

REQUIRED READINGS

Core readings are assigned during the first half of the course. These readings will provide the material necessary to achieve many of the knowledge objectives of the course. These core readings will also provide a foundational understanding for the group project. Depending on how each project develops, additional readings may be provided to support the individual consulting projects.

All required readings will be provided through the course website on CARMEN:

<http://www.carmen.osu.edu/>

Once you have logged on to CARMEN you will see a link for this course. You will need to sign on to CARMEN using your OSU Internet name.

OFFICE HOURS

Professors Landsbergen and Howe have scheduled office hours but feel free to set up an appointment outside of these scheduled times. In fact, since this capstone course is largely a consulting project, it is expected that you will send an email or meet outside of our weekly scheduled time. I will also provide my personal telephone number if you need to talk by phone.

CLASS RESOURCES

Discussion Boards

Discussion Boards provide another way to communicate about the course. There is a high likelihood that if you have a question, others will have that same question. Discussion

boards are sometimes a more effective way to deal with many questions because the whole class enjoys the benefit of your question and our responses. If you do have a question, we encourage you to use the discussion board if it is appropriate and you feel comfortable in posting your question there.

Collaborative Authoring Technologies

There are two tools available for supporting you in authoring the project deliverables: 1) CarmenWiki; and 2) BuckeyeBox. Both tools are available free to OSU students and use the standard OSU login id and password.

CarmenWiki allows you to easily create and edit a group wiki. We have used a wiki in previous projects and it has allowed us to produce professional documents where many students were involved in the project:

<https://carmenwiki.osu.edu/display/pubpolm821sp201115932/Social+Media+Service+Project>

Here is the URL for our CarmenWiki should you decide to go this route:

<https://carmenwiki.osu.edu/display/pubafrs7960au201330945/Autumn+2013+PUBAFRS+7960%3A+Capstone%3A++Information+Management+Home>

I have already provided a template for this project. If you choose this route, once you are done with the collaborative writing of the wiki, you can export the wiki into a Word document for final editing and formatting for presentation to the client. The CarmenWiki has the advantage of making it very easy to incorporate linked documents and to insert URLs. The downside is that the editing is not as powerful as MS Word.

The **Buckeye Box** is essentially a large dropbox for your group materials and like the CarmenWiki, you can be notified of when someone edits the document. There are several apps associated with the Buckeye Box. You can leave messages for one another and track your progress. Like Carmen Wiki you can edit documents. The editing capabilities are easier and more powerful than CarmenWiki. The disadvantage of the Buckeye Box is that it does not lend itself to linked documents. If students decide to use the Buckeye Box, you may consider using a tool like [Delicious](#) to manage the results of your Internet searches. This type of tool makes it easy to capture URLs, take notes on it, and share it with your colleagues. You can easily install it as add-on to your favorite browser.

GRADING**Assigned Course Grade**

The final letter grade assigned will be based upon the traditional ten point breakdown for each letter grade. Hence, a B+ is assigned where the points fall into the 87-89 range, and a B, where the points fall in the 84-86 range.

Points	Grade
90 - 100	A
80 - 89	B
70 - 79	C
60 - 69	D

Grade Components

Component	Points	(Date)
Mid-Term Examination	30	10/3
Class Participation	10	
Project Deliverables	40	9/12, 9/19, 10/17, 10/31, 11/14, 11/21
Peer Assessment	10	10/3, 12/11
Presentations to Client	10	10/31, 12/5 – 12/11
Total Possible Points	100	

Mid-Term Examination

The midterm examination measures student progress in meeting the knowledge objectives as well as their understanding and involvement in their group project. The Capstone Exam will **also** constitute the University's required master's examination for the Master of Arts degree. The Masters of Arts degree exams will be graded by the School's examination committee.

Students will be required to complete a graded take-home examination. The exam will be made available through Carmen on September 27 and is due October 3. More specifics on page length will be provided with the examination. This exam will comprise 30% of the grade for the course. As a rough indication of the time spent on the examination, estimate the amount of time that you would normally devote to a midterm examination that counts for 30% of your grade.

The exam is intended to test a student's ability to integrate the knowledge and skills gained throughout her or his graduate program and apply it to practice. ***While students may be working in groups on their capstone projects, collaboration with other students on this exam is strictly prohibited. Please see the Academic Misconduct section later in the syllabus.*** Here is the list of possible questions that you should be prepared to answer. The actual questions may be worded differently but they will essentially ask about the same knowledge or skill. All or some subset of the questions may actually show up for the midterm. Questions for this exam could include the following:

- 1) Clearly define the problem addressed by your capstone project. What evidence is there that this is a significant problem worthy of our attention? Who are the relevant stakeholders and what are their roles? Also, identify any previous policy or management efforts to address the problem.
- 2) Critically assess previous evaluations of the same or similar topic. Components of this assessment should include design, data, statistical methods, internal and external validity, and the counterfactual.
- 3) Discuss how you plan to address the problem. Why are you choosing this approach, and why is this preferred over other approaches you examined? Further, discuss the rationale for the outcome measures you have chosen.
- 4) Discuss the policy or managerial alternatives you are examining. What are the specific criteria you will use to compare the alternatives?
- 5) Thinking about your recommendations (or choose one of the possible recommendations if you are not yet ready to make a recommendation), address possible spillovers and the political, organizational, legal, and economic conditions that may affect the successful implementation of your choice.
- 6) How can you evaluate whether the suggested alternatives are being implemented well (formative evaluation) or once they have been implemented, whether they were successful (summative evaluation)?

Class Participation

Class participation is very important to this class and you must participate.

Points	Grade	Criteria
10-9	A	Student frequently participates in class
8-7	A-	Student periodically participates in class
6-5	B+	Student has participated in class
4-3	B	Student attends classes but never participates
2-0	B-	Student infrequently attends class

You can participate in class in many ways: 1) answering questions during class discussion; or 2) asking a question to clarify a point made during class discussion; 3) volunteering a personal experience in class; or 4) participating in discussion boards.

Project Deliverables

The largest portion of the grade will be determined by the quality of the project deliverables.

To make sure that the products are high quality, the class will be working on the deliverables from the beginning of the semester and incrementally adding and improving them over time until we have a final product.

The project deliverables are broken up into manageable pieces. By breaking up this large project into smaller manageable units and incrementally working with the instructors to refine and improve the product we will end up with a high quality product that the client will benefit from and about which we can be proud.

The course instructors are consultants to the student consultants. Feel free to engage us on any question you might have. We are invested in the success of this class project.

The deliverables will be graded using the rubric found on the course website.

Please strongly consider using the Project Task guidelines found on the course website.

Peer Assessment

As a group project, individual members are responsible to each other for producing a quality product. One of the goals of the course is to provide an opportunity to improve one's skills in working on group projects.

One of the ways to assess the contributions made to the group deliverables and the development of these group skills is through a peer assessment. Twice during the semester, you will be asked to provide comments and recommendations on the effort and output of your peer group members. The instruments and procedures can be found on the course website. The instruments not only assess contribution to the project ("penalties" or "rewards") but also provide a vehicle through which you can provide constructive feedback to the development of your own and your colleagues' professional skills.

Presentations to the Client

The final component of the grade will be the two presentations made to the client. One presentation will be made on October 31 and the final presentation will be scheduled sometime during finals week (December 5 -11). The presentation grading rubric can be found on the course website.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

In accordance with Faculty Rule 3335-5-487, all instances of alleged academic misconduct will be reported to the department chairperson and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (<http://oaa.osu.edu/coam.html>).

Academic misconduct is grounds for failing the course and may be grounds for further sanctions. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, giving or receiving information during an examination and submitting plagiarized work for academic requirements. For additional information, download the *Code of Student Conduct (PDF file)*.

If you have any questions or concerns, please discuss them with me.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION POLICY

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307; TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

SAMPLE

Class Schedule

	Date	Session	Readings	Deliverable
1	8/22	Meet with Kevin Kilbane, Westerville	Svara	
2	8/29	Meet with Deven Mehta, Deputy Director, Department of Administrative Services, State of Ohio (Meet at Rhodes Office Tower)	Big Data: Mayer-Schoenberger, McAfee, Sweden Open Data: White House, 2012; Sunlight Foundation; Examples Of Open Data NSA: Greenwald	(Team membership to be determined between 8/29 and 9/5)
3	9/5	Meet with Emma Speight, Upper Arlington and Christa Dickey, Westerville	Howe Rowe & Frewer Arnstein	
4	9/12	E-Government	Garson, Chapter 1: Vision of E-Governance Garson, Chapter 3: E-Democracy	Draft Problem Statement Project Tasks and Milestones Team Responsibilities
5	9/19	Social Media, Web 2.0	Feeney and Welch; Landsbergen O'Reilly	Objectives and Performance Measures
6	9/26	Theories of Democracy	Dewey Habermas Schumpeter;	Draft Alternatives (not graded)
7	10/3	Midterm Exam		
8	10/10	Participation CoProduction	Coleman Levine Pew Surveys Zhang	
9	10/17	Lab Day		Alternative Generation
10	10/24	Information Management	Kahn et al Redman NASCIO1 NASCIO2	
11	10/31	Present Client w/ Alternatives (in class or send electronic version)		Analysis of Alternatives
12	11/7	Lab Day		
13	11/14	Lab Day		Implementation Plan
14	11/21	Lab Day		Evaluation Plan
15	11/28	<i>No classes</i>		
Finals	12/5-12/11	Present Client w/ Implementation & Evaluation Plan		