

Humphrey School of Public Affairs University of Minnesota

PA 8081 006 – *Capstone Workshop* – Syllabus

Date: 1/10/24

Course Information and Logistics

Basics

- Credits: 3.0
Mode: Mixed: In-person and via Zoom (See Calendar)
Classroom: HHH #15
Day/Time: Wednesdays, 8:15-11:00AM, or as arranged (January 17 – April 24, 2024)
Team meetings (tentative):
- 8:15-8:45 Team 1 – Hennepin County Bikeway Safety
 - 8:45-9:15 Team 2 – La Crescent Indigenous History/Overlook
 - 9:15-9:45 Team 3 – MPLS-CPED Housing Program
 - 9:45-10:15 Team 4 – Beacon 30% AMI Housing
 - 10:15-10:45 Team 5 – Wayzata Redevelopment Study
 - 10:45-11:00 Flex/as required

Instructor: Peter Brown, FAICP, FAIA, PHD
Email: peter@peterhendeebrown.com
Website: <http://www.peterhendeebrown.com/>
Zoom Link: <https://umn.zoom.us/j/4569505722>
Cell Phone: 612.501.9590
Office: HHH 295-E
Office Hours: 11:00AM-12:00PM Wednesdays (after class) and as arranged

I am available by appointment by phone, email, text, or zoom, and will respond as quickly as I can to email. (Please use my personal email – I check it more regularly than my UMN email.)

Course Prerequisites

Core HHH courses in the MURP, MPP, MPA, MS-STEP, MDP, or MHR programs

My Teaching Philosophy

The famous Cambridge mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead believed that there was a three-stage “cycle of learning” that begins with “romance,” or an interest in the subject; then leads to “precision” – learning the techniques and methods required to understand the subject; and ends with “generalization,” and applying what has been learned to other areas. At this point in your academic careers, you have already pursued romance by seeking a degree in planning, policy, public administration, or another related discipline, and you have developed precision through all the learning from your

coursework. Now you will combine all of that – your personal interests with what you have learned – as you generalize across areas of expertise, types of knowledge, data gathering and analysis techniques, and other problem-solving methods, all while learning practical new project management skills that will come in handy in your professional careers. Whitehead’s idea of the cycle of learning has inspired me as an instructor – and as a constant learner in my own work and life – and I hope it will inspire you, too, and help you and your teams keep focused as you combine your individual strengths with *romance*, *precision*, and *generalization* to address the very real needs of your project partner while driving towards the successful completion of your capstone projects.

Classroom Norms

- Use evidence and clear statements to identify problems and propose solutions.
- Be hard on problems and solutions, not on people. Challenge others’ positions in the spirit of appreciative inquiry.
- Listen to others carefully, respectfully and with empathy.
- Allow time and space for all to speak who wish to speak.
- Don’t assume that any aspect of a person’s identity defines their views on a topic we are discussing. Nor should you assume that anyone in the class automatically serves as a spokesperson for any particular group.

Introduction – About the Course

But first, about this Syllabus

Although this will be my second time teaching the Capstone Workshop, Professor Greg Lindsey has taught it many times, and so last year, when I was preparing to teach it for the first time, I relied heavily upon him for advice. I also asked him if I might borrow the contents of his syllabus, which he generously agreed to and which I used almost wholesale, but for some minor editing. I have edited the syllabus more this year, based on what I learned last year, but much of the content that follows is Greg’s, to whom I remain very grateful.

Course Structure

The Capstone Workshop (PA 8081) is a one-semester course that fulfills the professional paper or capstone requirements for the Humphrey School MURP, MPP, MPA, MS-STEP, MDP, and MHR programs. This section of the course historically has focused on planning and policy topics of greatest interest to MURP, MPP, MPA, and MS-STEP students, but students in the MDP and MHR programs also have enrolled.

With the exception of class discussions at the beginning of the semester, PA 8081 is entirely project-based. Your entire effort will be devoted to completion of the professional projects you design at the beginning of the semester in response to a problem statement provided by your partners or clients. Because most of the organizations we work with do not pay for the privilege of working with you and your teams, I prefer to refer to them as partners rather than clients. An exception is Resilient Communities Program (RCP) projects, for which partners do pay a nominal fee. In either case, the roles of partners simulate that of a client or project supervisor.

Frequently Asked Questions about Capstones

What is a capstone course?

A capstone course is a culminating experience – a course designed to provide opportunities for students to integrate and apply knowledge from their core, concentration, and elective courses, to gain insight into the meanings of professionalism, and to reflect on the norms of a discipline or profession. In the Humphrey School, capstones have been designed to give students exposure to the plan- and policy-making processes through projects and other assignments, with emphases on integrating aspects of research and planning and policymaking. You will learn by practicing skills developed during your course of study at the Humphrey School, through feedback from teammates and partners, and from reflection on your experiences.

Why are capstone courses required?

Capstone courses are required to provide students the opportunity to demonstrate they can integrate and use knowledge and skills learned in other courses in the curriculum. Most courses in the curriculum focus on particular bodies of knowledge and typically do not provide opportunities to integrate knowledge across courses or to reflect deeply on the meaning of professional work. This course differs in that you will be expected to understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create information from all relevant courses as well as new information acquired particularly for this course. You will be expected to do so with respect to an unfamiliar topic within a strict time frame while working with team members you may just have met and partners who typically will have more professional experience than you have. We require team projects because virtually all professional work is undertaken collaboratively with colleagues. Few, if any, other courses in the curriculum have such broad and ambitious objectives as do capstones.

From another more pragmatic perspective, capstones are required because they help meet requirements for accreditation. Both our MURP and MPP programs are accredited by separate organizations who periodically evaluate whether students are acquiring the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to succeed in professional practice. Academics and practitioners who help evaluate our programs for accreditation expect that students have an opportunity to integrate knowledge gained in classes and to reflect on the meaning of professional practice. They review capstone reports and assessments completed by project partners as part of accreditation reviews.

What general types of learning will occur?

This course is designed to help you learn in five domains of professional work: empirical, methodological, theoretical, interpersonal, and ethical. You will gain empirical knowledge: new facts, for example, about the public problem you are working to solve. You will use different methodologies to produce policy relevant information – these methodologies likely will include literature review, secondary data collection and statistical analysis, key informant interviews and/or focus groups, use of geographic information systems (GIS), and perhaps original data collection through some type of survey. You will explore theories that serve as a lens for ordering and interpreting particular facts and provide a basis for selection of methodologies. You will gain new interpersonal skills through your work with your teammates and your partners or clients. And in wrestling with complex problems and

questions of fact and value, you will gain new insights into the ethical dimensions of professional practice.

How will this course be taught?

PA 8081 will be largely self-taught in that you will learn by listening, writing, doing (action), practice, re-writing, and reflection. You will become the subject matter experts. I will provide guidance and serve as an advisor and coach. Your partners and I together will provide feedback and constructive criticism. I will discuss with you how to approach your learning and your project, and I will review and critique your written work and your practice presentations.

Our class sessions will involve discussions project planning, project management and team progress. After our second session, I will meet with teams individually, on zoom, for 30 minutes each, during the regularly scheduled class time. During team meetings we will follow agendas set by the team. If your team believes it is not necessary to meet on any given week, you can let me know, and we won't meet. I recommend we plan to meet every week typically, even if just for a 15-minute check-in. Weekly meetings are a good way to plan and pace the work.

At the beginning of the semester, you will also contact your partner and find a day/time that works for a 60-minute, regular, weekly partner meeting (team, partner, and me) and send a calendar invitation to all parties for the entire semester. This meeting may last only 15 or 30 minutes and, as with our meetings, you may choose to cancel it several times towards the end of the semester and use the time for work. Reserving the time is important as civil servants have packed schedules and can be very difficult to schedule on short notice.

In addition to scheduled class sessions, your teams will meet independently to discuss work assignments and to collaborate on tasks. When you are working in teams, how you assign tasks will be up to you as will how frequently you meet. The critical issue is to begin work on tasks early, to stay on task, and to always save time for analyses and for revising and rewriting your project report.

For all of your meetings, you will prepare an agenda in advance. This does not need to be lengthy or complex, but before you meet you should be thinking: *“What is the most important thing we should be doing right now?”*

Capstone Learning Objectives

Consistent with the capstone's unique role in the curriculum, you have distinctive learning objectives. To complete this capstone successfully, you and your teammates must demonstrate the ability to complete a professional project within one semester that meets your partner's expectations, fulfills their need for information, and helps them further their mission. Specifically, you must demonstrate you are able to:

1. Prepare and execute a plan or scope of work to inform public or civic action on a public problem;
2. Prepare a clear, succinct technical report, memorandum, or other deliverable (e.g., a story map) that includes evidence and evidence-based recommendations for some proposed course of action;

3. Make a short, engaging professional presentation for your partners and others;
4. Work effectively with teammates and partners; and
5. Reflect on your experience and assess the performance your teammates and your own work.

**Note: you may determine that a research report is not the product your partners' need and that databases, documentation, websites, or other products better serve their needs. Think creatively, and do not be constrained by the references to technical report or memorandum.*

Capstone Assignments

Your specific class assignments mirror the course objectives (Tables 1 and 2):

1. Revise and complete the team contract developed by your team during the fall Capstone Preparation Workshop;
2. Review and revise the DRAFT Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) developed by your team during the fall Capstone Preparation Workshop;
3. Review and revise the DRAFT plan of work developed by your team during the Capstone Preparation Workshop;
4. Finalize the plan of work with your partner and complete and execute the MOA;
5. Prepare three drafts of your reports and/or other deliverables;
6. Present your findings to your partner and to other professionals at a mutually agreed upon time; and
7. Submit your final deliverables to your partner and to me.

You also must reflect on your own performance and complete your team's peer evaluation form.

Semester Schedule

The semester schedule includes deadlines for submission of draft and final MOA and plans of work; interim draft reports; your team's final report; and peer evaluations (Tables 1 and 2). The goal is to finalize the plan of work by the end of the second week of class (by which time 13% of the semester will be over!). You are responsible for submitting interim drafts of your report to me at the end of the second and third months of the semester. I do not expect these to be complete drafts with all results and findings. The purpose of these drafts is to help make sure you are making progress and to provide multiple opportunities for editing sections of your report. These first two drafts will not be submitted to your partner. Your third draft of your report will be submitted to me and, after I authorize you to do so, to your partner. Your fourth draft will be your final report. Each of the assignments will be submitted through Canvas. The dates for submission of the final draft of your report will occur following your team presentations to your partners and therefore likely will vary. Your presentations should occur at a location and time chosen or convenient for your partner. The reason for submitting the final draft after your presentation is that issues may arise during the presentation that you need to address in the final deliverable.

Regular Meetings and Agendas – Expectations

You and your team should assume that you will have two regular standing meetings per week on Zoom: One with your team and just me (30 minutes), and the other with your team, me, and your project partner (60 minutes).

1. Your individual team meeting times with me are on first page of this syllabus. Your team leader will set up the zoom meeting and send me an invitation
2. You will contact your partner in the first week of the semester and work with them to find a time that works for all of your team members, your partner's team members, and me.
3. You will be responsible for preparing an agenda for both meetings. Your agenda should be tailored to the needs of your team and those of your partner and should be flexible/adaptable and based on your project's needs in the moment – do not recite the same agenda headings every week when they are not relevant. You should create a template for your agenda the first week of the semester but assume that it will change as the project develops over the course of the semester. You should not view the agenda as a pesky formality, but rather as a powerful tool that you will use to move the project forward and towards a successful completion.
4. You will lead both sets of meetings and, in collaboration with me and your partner, you will decide how long the meeting needs to be and if/when it makes sense to cancel the meeting to allow for work time or because not much has changed since the previous meeting, particularly towards the end of the semester.
5. The basic idea here is that it is far easier to schedule a standing weekly meeting at the beginning of the semester and then cancel if unnecessary, than it is to schedule a meeting on short notice, one at a time, every week.

The Final Capstone Document

Each Capstone team's project will be different. Your team's primary focus could be on preparing a traditional study, a small area plan, a story map, a presentation tool, or a case study comparison. Every capstone project, however, must incorporate a few key components.

1. Front-end: You must assume that someone who picks up your report knows nothing about it. Therefore, the report should begin with an introduction that includes context, an explanation of who the team and partners are, the partner government and geography, the need for the study, the approach, and etc. This is the who, what, why, where, when, and how.
2. Literature Review: Most of you will probably include some form of literature review. It may be broad, depending upon the subject, or it may be narrow, focusing for example, on the general knowledge of the subject area, case studies of similar initiatives from around the US (or locally/regionally), or the methodology used for your own study. Start the literature review as early as possible – a good one takes a while to complete, and you know enough to start a general overview now.
3. Conclusion and Recommendations: You will summarize the goals and purpose of your project, the methodologies you used, your general findings, and your recommendations for implementation, any gaps or weaknesses in the study or methodology, and suggestions for future study and next steps.
4. Appendices: You will include appendices as required to supplement the report, although you will not attach all of your work product. For a study with a qualitative component, for example, you may include an anonymized list of interview subjects,

the questionnaires, and a summary of the responses, but you will not include all of your interview notes. Similarly, for a more quantitative project where you use an online survey, you may use graphics, such as pie or bar charts, to illustrate the findings in the body of the report, and then include more detailed summaries or tables in the appendix and complete data sets by reference.

5. Slide Deck of Final Presentation: You will produce a highly refined, clear, and simple PowerPoint (PPT) slide show for presentation in class, and to your partners. You will begin drafting this show early in the semester and sharing it with the class and with your partners, improving it throughout the course of the semester. Your final presentation may be a very concise 10 minute/ten slide presentation in front of a City Council, or it may be a 30-40 slide, hour-long, less formal presentation, Q&A, and discussion with the key staff group in your partner agency.

Required Forms and Instructions

You will be required to complete several forms throughout the semester. The required forms and instructions are listed below and all are also located in the “Forms” folder on the course Canvas site.

1. Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Form
2. Capstone Deposit Instructions (You can also find these instructions under “Documenting Completion of Professional Paper” on the Capstone Page of the HHH Website). For Capstone deposit, you will also fill out the following two forms:
 - a. HHH Capstone Title Page (signed). You must use this as the template for the cover page of your final capstone project
 - b. University Digital Conservancy Deposit Agreement (The process is different or RCP projects, so see the additional instructions, in “Capstone Deposit Instructions,” above.)
3. Evaluation Forms: There are three evaluation forms that will be completed at the end of the semester. Each student must complete the Peer Review form and submit it to me at the end of the semester. The other two evaluation forms are for the client/partner and the instructor, and are included for your information.
 - a. Peer Evaluation Form (Each team member must fill out and submit this form at the same time the final capstone is deposited)
 - b. Client/Partner Evaluation Form (FYI)
 - c. Instructor Evaluation Form (FYI)

Table 1: Class Schedule and Project Milestones (LIVE, Zoom, Assignment Due)

Week 1 (1/17): LIVE IN CLASS

Read Before Class: The Syllabus. Review Capstone Prep materials (MOA, Contract, Work Plan)

Discussion: Introductions; About the Course; Project Mgmt.; preparing workplans & schedules

Week 2 (1/24): Zoom – individual teams

Due Before Class: Submit **Project Workplan** to instructor

Discussion: Individual team meetings w/instructor; partner meetings as scheduled by teams

Week 3 (1/31): Zoom – individual teams

Due Before Class: Submit **REVISED Project Workplan** to instructor, then partner, once approved

Meetings: Individual team meetings w/instructor; partner meetings as scheduled by teams

Week 4 (2/7): Zoom – individual teams

Due Before Class: Submit **FINAL Project Workplan** to instructor, then partner, once approved

Meetings: Individual team meetings w/instructor; partner meetings as scheduled by teams

Week 5 (2/14): Zoom – NO CLASS (Peter away – skip or reschedule for Mon-Tues)

Meetings: Partner meetings as scheduled by teams

Week 6 (2/21): LIVE IN CLASS

Due Before Class: **PPT PROGRESS REPORTS in class; FIRST DRAFT REPORT due Friday**

Week 7 (2/28): Zoom – individual teams

Meetings: Individual team meetings w/instructor; partner meetings as scheduled by teams

Week 8 (3/6): SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

Week 9 (3/13): Zoom – individual teams

Meetings: Individual team meetings w/instructor; partner meetings as scheduled by teams

Week 10 (3/20): LIVE IN CLASS

Due Before Class: **PPT PROGRESS REPORTS in class; SECOND DRAFT REPORT due Fri.**

Week 11 (3/27): Zoom – individual teams

Meetings: Individual team meetings w/instructor; partner meetings as scheduled by teams

Week 12 (4/3): Zoom – individual teams

Meetings: Individual team meetings w/instructor; partner meetings as scheduled by teams

Week 13 (4/10): Zoom – individual teams

Meetings: Individual team meetings w/instructor; partner meetings as scheduled by teams

Week 14 (4/17): Zoom – individual teams (APA Conference in Minneapolis – 4/13-4/16)

Due This Week: **THIRD DRAFT REPORT due Friday**

Meetings: Individual team meetings w/instructor; partner meetings as scheduled by teams

Week 15 (4/24): LIVE IN CLASS

Discussion: **In-class practice presentations – all teams, 15-30 minutes each, w/guests**

FRIDAY 5/10, 5:00PM – Submit Final Project Report, PPT show, and Peer Evaluations & Reflections. DEPOSIT YOUR CAPSTONE PROJECT.

Assessment of Performance and Grading

Your grade will be based primarily on the quality of your team's final deliverables and presentation to your client. Peer evaluations will be used to help make judgments about individual contributions and to determine individual grades. Feedback from your community partners also will be used to inform grades. The form you will use to evaluate your colleagues and the form your clients will use to assess your team's performance are available on Canvas. In addition, as part of accreditation, we ask alumni and the professionals working in our field to assess our capstone projects. The forms used in these peer reviews also are on the course website.

My assessment of the quality of your final report will be based primarily on my own professional experience as both the client and the consultant (e.g., drafting and responding to requests for proposals and both producing and reviewing the products of others, including technical reports, implementation plans, and grant proposals for public and nonprofit agencies and consulting firms). I may use grading templates or rubrics to ensure systematic evaluation of particular criteria, but my use of these tools will not change the fact that my assessment of your work ultimately will be value-laden and subjective. Subjective assessments are not necessarily arbitrary, however, and they are the primary method of assessment in the professional world. For example, agencies frequently issue requests for proposals for consulting support, and firms bid in response to them. The selection of contractors is a systematic but ultimately subjective process in which cost of services is balanced against other factors such as perceived quality of proposed services. More relevant to our class, professionals routinely make judgments about the quality of reports submitted to satisfy contractual requirements or to support policy initiatives. Aside from obvious errors of fact or objective analysis, these judgments are inherently subjective and involve application of professional norms. This class is designed to simulate aspects of these types of processes.

Here are scenarios that illustrate how I will use professional norms to assign grades:

- **“A” Scenario.** A team defines a research question clearly; proceeds from a well written plan of work; meets with the client regularly (i.e., at least monthly) 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. Team members work well together. 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 deliverable tells 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 a draft that could be improved with

additional editing. The draft may be 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. Members work well together overall, but contributions are uneven. Although the research may be good, 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.

- "C" Scenario. A team begins its research but struggles to make progress; 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 tasks but fails to integrate material well; recognizes limitations of their research and works hard to salvage the report but runs out of time; and submits a final report is clear and readable but really adds nothing of value to the client and does not extend knowledge of issue, problem, or process. Team members begin with good intentions but bickering over who has done what work takes time away from productive activity. Although the team may have put in many hours and worked hard, this team receives a grade of C because the final product is of marginal value to the client. Members of teams that submit final reports that are incomplete or have multiple typographical errors will automatically receive grades of "C."

Note that in these scenarios, grades are based on the quality of the final deliverables, not on effort by individuals. Some students have complained in the past that they have "worked too hard to receive only a B." I expect hard work, but your hard work is your individual input, not your team's collective output, and the grade is for your collective output and the potential impact of your team's work as judged according to professional norms.

Historically, most capstone projects have gone well, although a few projects have fizzled or bombed. If your team submits a report judged to be in the C category or below, I may decline to forward it to the client. The reasons for this decision would be that I 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. I 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 team-mates 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 plan 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. Failure to complete the course by the end of the semester will result in a reduction of final grade by a minimum of one letter grade.

Commitment to Academic Integrity

I expect the highest level of academic integrity, will adhere strictly to the University of Minnesota Student Conduct Code, and will enforce rules and procedures concerning academic misconduct, including plagiarism, whether inadvertent or intentional. If you are not familiar with activities considered to be academic misconduct, please review the Code: (https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/2022-07/policy_student_conduct_code.pdf).

Some Technical Matters and Administrative Issues ...

- Please copy me on all emails and meeting invitations with your client. This practice will help me monitor your progress and understand your client's priorities. I typically will not comment or participate in conversations with your client. I may, however, follow up with your team about the conversations. (I have had Basecamp sites set up for all projects in this course section, so if you email through Basecamp's message board, I will automatically be copied. I do not need to be copied on all email correspondence between student team members.)
- Do not submit draft plans of work or draft interim or final reports to your partners until I have reviewed them and authorized submission. You also must schedule time for your partners to review and comment on draft reports.
- You must retain all files, data, and analyses that you complete during the course of the semester and submit original documentation of results along with your report. You must provide copies of your files, including databases, to your partners. This is essential to support the authenticity and validity of your findings.
- Your research report should include guidance on how to cite your paper. Here is an example:

Byrd, Erika and Anne Gadwa (2009). "Working Effectively with Somali Residents through the Arts: Collective Wisdom from the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood." Completed for the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Revitalization Program, Minneapolis MN. PA 8081capstone project report, Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Minneapolis, MN. (Available from Cedar Humphrey Action for Neighborhood Collaborative Engagement (CHANCE): http://www.hhh.umn.edu/projects/chance/community_based_research.html).

Adherence to Relevant University Policies

The University's Education & Student life policies are available in the [online Policy Library](#).

Student Conduct Code

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. To support this environment, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University you are expected to adhere to the [Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code\(PDF\)](#). Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach and/or a student's ability to learn." The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities.

Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Using personal electronic devices in the classroom setting can hinder instruction and learning, not only for the student using the device but also for other students in the class. To this end, the University establishes the right of each instructor to determine if and how personal electronic devices are allowed to be used in the classroom. For complete information, please review the [Teaching and Learning: Student Responsibilities](#) policy.

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, including the unauthorized use of online learning support and testing platforms; 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, misrepresenting, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. If it is determined that a student has cheated, the student may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see: [Teaching and Learning: Instructor and Unit Responsibility](#).

The [Office for Community Standards](#) has compiled a useful list of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty.

Beware of websites that advertise themselves as being "tutoring websites." It is not permissible to upload any instructor materials to these sites without their permission or copy material for your own homework assignments from these various sites. If you have additional questions and concerns, 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., when and whether

collaboration on assignments is permitted, requirements and methods for citing sources, if electronic aids are permitted or prohibited during an exam.

Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences

Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections. For complete information, please see: Administrative Policy: *Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences: Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, Rochester.*

Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information, please see Administrative Policy: *Teaching and Learning: Student Responsibilities.*

University Grading Scales

The University has two distinct grading scales: A-F and S-N. The A-F and S/N grading scales allow the following grades and corresponding GPA points:

Letter Grade	GPA Points	Definitions
A	4.000	Represents achievement that significantly exceeds expectations in the course.
A-	3.667	
B+	3.333	
B	3.000	Represents achievement that is above the minimum expectations in the course.
B-	2.667	
C+	2.333	
C	2.000	Represents achievement that meets the minimum expectations in the course.
C-	1.667	
D+	1.333	
D	1.000-	Represents achievement that partially meets the minimum expectations in the course. Credit is earned but it may not fulfill major or program requirements.
F	0.000	Represents failure in the course and no credit is earned.
S/N		
S	0.00	Satisfactory (equivalent to a C- or better)
N	0	Not Satisfactory

For additional information, please refer to Administrative Policy: *Grading and Transcripts: Crookston, Morris, Rochester, Twin Cities.*

Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking and Relationship Violence

The University prohibits sexual misconduct, and encourages anyone experiencing sexual misconduct to access resources for personal support and reporting. If you want to speak

confidentially with someone about an experience of sexual misconduct, please contact a confidential [*resource on your campus*](#). If you want to report sexual misconduct, or have questions about the University's policies and procedures related to sexual misconduct, please contact your campus [*Title IX office or relevant policy contacts*](#).

Instructors are required to share information they learn about possible sexual misconduct with the campus Title IX office that addresses these concerns. This allows a Title IX staff member to reach out to those who have experienced sexual misconduct to provide information about personal support resources and options for investigation. You may talk to instructors about concerns related to sexual misconduct, and they will provide support and keep the information you share private to the extent possible given their University role.

For more information, please see [*Administrative Policy: Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking and Relationship Violence*](#).

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, familial status, disability, public assistance status, membership or activity in a local commission created for the purpose of dealing with discrimination, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: [*Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action \(PDF\)*](#).

Disability Accommodations

My goal is to create a learning environment that is accessible and inclusive for all students. If you anticipate any barriers related to the design of the course (e.g., format, materials, or structure), please contact me outside of class so we can explore potential options. If you have a disability and want to explore formal accommodations and/or further resources, please contact the UM Twin Cities campus Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 612.626.1333, visit the website at <https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/>, or email drc@umn.edu.

If you have already consulted with your DRC, please share your letter with me as soon as you can to discuss how your accommodations will be implemented in this course.

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 a student's 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 the Student Mental Health Website at <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**

Academic Freedom and Responsibility

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. 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.*

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. *[Customize with names and contact information as appropriate for the course/college/campus.]*

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

This publication/material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the instructor.