

The Murphy Institute

City University of New York

Urban Studies Capstone Course (3 Credits/Grad)

Fall 2016

Tuesday, 6:15- 8:45PM

Room: 19th Floor Conference Room

Instructor: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Email: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Office Hours: By appointment only

Office: 1812

Course Description

This course is for graduate students who are completing their M.A. in Urban Studies. The primary purpose of this class is to assist you in completing your capstone project— a requirement of the degree program. The capstone project is aimed at offering you the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge in an area of urban studies by undertaking a manageable research project that builds upon your previous coursework.

This course guides students in formulating, researching, and writing a capstone research paper. This workshop provides an environment for thinking about general research issues, obtaining feedback on outlines and drafts, and critiquing fellow students' work. After identifying a topic and formulating a clear research question, students will familiarize themselves with the relevant literature, gather and organize relevant data, and develop an appropriate methodology. Students will conduct the analysis and prepare a clear and persuasive paper that situates their question within a literature, describes and defends their analysis, and reports their findings.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

Design and an execute an independent research project on an issue in the field of Urban Studies

Demonstrate their knowledge of subjects and literature related to social conditions in urban environments and/or the problems facing urban workers and communities

Frame research questions and utilize basic research methodologies

Develop arguments and produce evidence to support intellectual claims

Describe, analyze and evaluate differing theories and debates within the field.

Write a coherent and well-reasoned analytic essay

Compose and deliver a polished presentation that clearly describes and discusses key intellectual claims and research findings

Program Learning Outcomes/Competencies Addressed in the Course

At the end of this course, students will have achieved competency in one or more of the following areas:

The link between social conditions in urban environments and the lives (e.g. problems, life chances, and opportunities) of urban workers and urban working-class and poor communities

Understanding how to analyze public policies and programs from a theoretical as well as practical perspective

Knowledge of immigrant populations and the challenges and opportunities they face in urban social, economic, and political contexts

Understanding the impact of race, gender, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation on the economic, social, and political life of cities; or understanding how urban economic, social, and political forces impact race, gender, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation.

Understanding how to analyze and evaluate forms of social advocacy, including community and labor organizing, political action, and coalitions among advocacy groups.

Evaluation

Student performance will be assessed in the following three areas: 1) Attendance and Class Participation; 2) Weekly Assignments; 3) Final Capstone Paper and Presentation

1) Attendance and Class Participation (20% of Final Grade)

Attendance is mandatory and robust participation is expected.

2) Weekly Assignments (20% of Final Grade)

While structured much like a writing workshop, this class will also require you to complete a number of assignments. These assignments are designed to help you develop a strong capstone research paper and ensure that you complete the project in a timely manner. Although it is important that you complete each assignment by the due date to receive full credit, it is expected that these draft sections will change as your project develops. While you may start with one research question, it is entirely possible that by

the end of the semester you have selected an altogether different one. The goal of these assignments, more than anything, is to help you organize your thoughts as early as possible so that you can finish.

3) Final Capstone and Presentation (60% of Final Grade)

While capstone projects may vary in form, the principle aim of this course will be to help you write a Master's thesis equivalent paper, a 20-30-page (excluding reference list and appendix) paper based upon original research.

*****All late assignments will receive a ZERO and will not be reviewed*****

Required Readings

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 2nd Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

Fred C. Lunenburg and Beverly J. Irby, *Writing a Successful Thesis or Dissertation: Tips and Strategies for Students in the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Corwin, 2007).

William Strunk and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style* (New York: Longman, 1999)

Resources and Information

The Murphy Writing Center

The Writing Center offers Murphy students one-to-one help on any writing project, at any stage of the writing process. The Writing Center also offers a series of reading and writing skills workshops.

<https://murphy.mywconline.com/>

Library Services

<http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/library/sps/>

Research and Information Literacy tutors

<https://www.etutoring.org/login.cfm?institutionid=159>

Common Writing Questions

<http://bacwritingfellows.common.gc.cuny.edu/for-students/faqs/>

Purdue University Writing Lab

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Note on Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is prohibited at the City University of New York.

Penalties for academic dishonesty include academic sanctions, such as failing

or otherwise reduced grades, and/or disciplinary sanctions, including suspension or expulsion. Please refer to CUNY SPS' statement on Academic Integrity for details: http://sps.cuny.edu/acad_policies/acad_integrity.html

Course Schedule

Aug 30 Introduction

Discussion: Introduction, Research Questions/Topics, and Journal Articles

In-class exercise: Brainstorming research topics and questions.

Sep 6 Library Workshop

Readings

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 2nd Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), Chapters 1-5.

Fred C. Lunenburg and Beverly J. Irby, *Writing a Successful Thesis or Dissertation: Tips and Strategies for Students in the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Corwin, 2007), Chapter 1.

Assignment #1/Research Question: Due Friday, September 9 by 5:00PM

Submit a 200-350-word description of your research topic and question. Your description should answer these questions: 1) What are you writing about? 2) What is it that you want to find out? 3) What is your dependent variable? 4) What are your independent variables? 5) What is your hypothesis?

Sep 13 Literature Review

20-Minute Writing Center Presentation

Discussion: What makes a good literature review?

Reading

Fred C. Lunenburg and Beverly J. Irby, *Writing a Successful Thesis or Dissertation: Tips and Strategies for Students in the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Corwin, 2007), Chapter 7.

Assignment #2/Summaries: Due Friday, September 16 by 5:00PM

Find and summarize 8 scholarly articles that speak to your research topic. These summaries should be between 200-400 words each and answer these questions: 1) What is the research question? 2) What is the hypothesis (or hypotheses) the article is testing? 3) What is the main dependent variable? 4) What are the key

independent variables? 5) How does the article conceptualize and measure those variables? 6) What is the methodology? 7) What are the main findings in the article? 8) Do you find the article persuasive? Why or why not?

Sep 20

Literature Review

In-Class Writing Center (30-Minute Session Per Student)

Assignment #3/Literature Review: Due Friday, September 23 by 5:00PM

The purpose of a literature review is not merely to stake out what has already been said, it is also about making an argument about how your own research will contribute to and advance the debate. For your literature review, you will rework your summaries from Assignment 2 into a coherent narrative. This narrative should do two things: 1) it should offer a broad overview of the literature on your topic—highlighting the key themes, debates and tensions that define this literature 2) and it should offer a modest argument about how your research proposes to advance the debate. Your literature review should be between 1500 and 2000 words. **You MUST consult the Writing Center before submitting the literature review.**

Sep 27

Research Design

In-class exercise: Share and discuss your “Literature Reviews”

Discussion: Research Design and Data

Readings

Fred C. Lunenburg and Beverly J. Irby, *Writing a Successful Thesis or Dissertation: Tips and Strategies for Students in the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Corwin, 2007), Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 2nd Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), Chapter 9.

Oct 4

No class

Oct 11

No Class

Assignment #4/Research Design: Due Thursday, October 13 by 5:00PM

In this assignment you will be asked to outline, explain, and defend your research design. What types of data will you gather? How will you analyze this data? How will this data help you test your hypotheses? What are the strengths and weaknesses of your design, methodology, and data? Your research design should be between 600 and 800 words.

- Oct 14** **Classes follow a Tuesday schedule**
Individual Meetings
- Oct 18** **Research**
Individual Meetings
- Oct 25** **Research/Writing**
30-Minute Writing Center presentation on operationalizing research.
- Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 2nd Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), Chapters 12-13.
- Nov 1** **Writing**
Individual Meetings
- Readings*
- Fred C. Lunenburg and Beverly J. Irby, *Writing a Successful Thesis or Dissertation: Tips and Strategies for Students in the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Corwin, 2007), Chapter 6.
- Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 2nd Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), Chapter 14.
- Nov 8** **Writing**
Individual meetings
In-Class Writing Center (30-Minute Session Per Student)
- Readings*
- Fred C. Lunenburg and Beverly J. Irby, *Writing a Successful Thesis or Dissertation: Tips and Strategies for Students in the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Corwin, 2007), Chapter 8.
- Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 2nd Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), Chapter 15.
- Nov 15** **First Draft**
Individual Meetings

Readings

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 2nd Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), Chapter 16.

Fred C. Lunenburg and Beverly J. Irby, *Writing a Successful Thesis or Dissertation: Tips and Strategies for Students in the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Corwin, 2007), Chapters 9-10.

Assignment #5/First Draft: Due Friday, November 18 by 5:00PM

Students must submit a first draft of your capstone paper. Your first draft must include the following sections: introduction, literature review, research design, results, and discussion. The draft must include a full reference list. Your first draft should be at least 18 pages (excluding reference list and appendix).

Nov 22 Presentation Preparation

In-class exercise: Review the elements of a successful presentation

Nov 29 Presentations

Assignment #6/Peer Reviews: Due Friday, December 2 by 5:00PM

You must offer constructive feedback on two first drafts. To help you provide constructive feedback, the Professor Fortner will provide you with a rubric.

Dec 6 Presentations

Dec 20 Final Capstone Due