

Syllabus for MSMGT 790 Capstone Preparation Course

NOTE: This syllabus document contains the basic information about this course. The most current syllabus is available in the course.

Course Description

The course builds on the methods used in sustainability management research covered in MSMGT 720 to help students develop a research proposal for their MSMGT Capstone course project (792). Typically this project will involve an in-depth look at a sustainability issue applicable in their place of employment or in a local not-for profit organization.

Course topics include:

- Review of organizational research methodologies (MSMGT 720)
- Literature reviews
- Types of qualitative and quantitative research
- Writing the research proposal
- Presentation of the research proposal

Prerequisite(s)

None

Course Outcomes

- Apply a holistic sustainability perspective to an organization's specific problem.
- Formulate and write a well-defined and feasible research proposal for the capstone course project.
- Compare the strengths and limitations of various project study designs.
- Identify and apply the appropriate literature to support your proposal.
- Identify potential limitations of the proposal.
- Assess the potential implications of your proposal.

Course Requirements/Components

This course is different from those you have previously taken in the program. The balance of the semester is an independent, individual exploration of potential capstone projects based on your experience in the degree program applied to a specific work issue.

You will be in consultation with the instructor from time to time to help you clarify your project goals.

As you build your capstone project proposal, you will have a few assignments that are due every few weeks. These include the following:

1. Topic proposal
2. Initial bibliography (short bibliography that supports your idea)
3. Research methods (description of how you will collect the data necessary to complete your project)
4. Timetable and resources required

All of these assignments are essentially "living documents" and should grow, expand, and possibly change as you get further into your project.

In addition, you will have two assignments that are the culmination of your previous work:

1. First, you will be required to compose a presentation that explains what your project is and why you are interested in doing it. This presentation will be shared with the class so that you can see what your colleagues are doing.
2. The final project is to put everything together into a formal, written project proposal for your SMGT 792 Capstone course. This document includes the previous sections you have worked on and also includes a projected timetable for your intended work. It is this document that will guide you in the following semester as you do your project.

Presentation of Proposal

This can be a narrated slide presentation, a video, or a combination of the two. It is essentially an "elevator pitch" in the tradition of entrepreneurship, where you have a few minutes to tell others about your project and why you chose it. This presentation will consist of:

- A description of your project and why you chose your topic

- A brief summary describing what is known about the topic and what you believe needs to be known next
 - a. This portion of the presentation should be based on a critical review of the literature and your own personal experience (if relevant).
 - b. If you are proposing an action based research project, describe how your project developed out of your personal experiences at work.
- Presentation will describe all aspects of the proposed study and should address the following questions:
 - a. What kind of research are you proposing?
 - b. How will you assess your findings?
 - c. What is the population that you are studying (employees, customers other?)
 - d. If you are conducting a survey or questionnaire, how large is your sample and why will people participate?
 - e. What do you expect to find?
 - f. What weaknesses exist in your proposed research?
 - g. How do you expect your findings to affect your professional practice?

Presentation Rubric

Comprehensiveness (80 pts)		
Excellent (60–80 pts)	Adequate (40–60 pts)	Unsatisfactory (0–40 pts)
All requirements fully addressed	Most, but not all, requirements fully addressed	Most areas not fully addressed
Quality (20 pts)		
Excellent (16–20 pts)	Adequate (10–15 pts)	Unsatisfactory (0–9 pts)
Clear, concise recording, all PowerPoint slides readable and easily understood	Recording OK but not totally clear and concise; PowerPoint slides not all clear and to the point	Poor recording, slides not relevant to the topic

Here is a good resource for presentations:

<https://www.linkedin.com/business/learning/blog/productivity-tips/5-best-practices-for-making-awesome-powerpoint-slides>

Note: A National Science Foundation panel found (reported in November 2011 issue of *Research Development & Grant Writing News*) that the majority of research proposals are either:

1. Too broad; overly ambitious and usually lacking important details and specifics, which makes it difficult for reviewers to be convinced that it can be completed
2. Too narrow; too simplistic and without a measurable impact
3. Weakly integrated; consisting of a group of unrelated activities

Written Research Proposal for Your Capstone Project

The written project proposal paper should be between 8 and 10 pages (typed, double-spaced). The paper should describe, in detail, a proposed project to study in your Capstone Course (MSMGT 792). This paper should include the following sections:

- An **introduction**, in which you describe your project
- A summary of the relevant **research literature** (including a full bibliography)
- A **methods** section, which describes how you will obtain the information for your project
- A **results** section in which you outline what you expect to find
- A **discussion** section in which you expound upon the potential ramifications of your project

Suggestions for writing a good proposal include but are not limited to:

- Choose the best topic appropriate for you and your investigation. A narrow topic focus is preferred to a broad general topic in order to conduct and analyze things in a timely manner.
- Create a good title, the shorter the better, but one that captures the essence of your work.
- Before writing the proposal, conduct some preliminary research in order to get a general idea about the topic and develop a base literature review.
- Give some “real world” examples that highlight the importance of the project.
- Write in a formal style, but keep the reader interested.
- Properly cite all sources, including web sites.

Grading

Grading is based upon completeness and quality of the research proposal. Of particular importance will be a careful definition of the research design and the appropriateness of the data gathering technique selected. The final product of this course should be a study that can be successfully conducted during the 792 course and provide value to the organization being studied.

Written assignments (4@50 pts each)	200
Written project proposal	200
Narrated presentation	100
Total	500