THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
THE BUSCH SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

MSM 674 Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications
Spring, 2018

Credit Hours
Three (3) Credit Graduate Hours

Prerequisites
Near completion of MSM Program

Classroom
Pangborn, 203

Days and hours of class meetings
January 12, 2018 to April 27, 2018
Fridays, 6:10pm-8:40pm **This is a hybrid course**
**Please see the course schedule for online and on campus meetings**
No class: March 9, (spring break), and March 30 (Good Friday)

**The last day to add/drop full-semester courses without penalty January 19, 2018**
**Last day to withdraw with a “W” March 28, 2018.**

Instructor contact information
Cheryl Wood, Ph.D.
Faculty e-mail – woodc@cua.edu
Cell phone number- 703-407-6378
Office hours - By appointment
Office Location: Pangborn, 325

Course description
This capstone course requires students to complete a major project, integrating the knowledge and skills they have acquired throughout the program. The project should focus on a practical business problem or opportunity. Students will analyze the problem or opportunity, formulate a number of potential solutions to the problem, defend the selected solution and discuss the implementation and impact of the solution.

Instructional methods
The course objectives and purpose will be pursued and conveyed by use of face-to-face, readings, writing, informal instructor presentations and student presentations. Group and individual consulting sessions will be held as required for successful completion by each learner.

Required text
Reference resource

Reading materials
Students will use relevant texts and material from their CUA master’s program as well as those identified and necessitated by their independent research.

Additional text items used during the semester are selected by the instructor, and given to students as class handouts. These materials are intended to supplement students’ knowledge about conducting research and utilizing research methods.

Libraries
The CUA Libraries’ wide range of resources and services, including databases, online journals, and FAQs are on the main website. For assistance on papers and assignments, consult the research guides or schedule an appointment with a subject librarian.

Metropolitan has its own resource/subject expert contact:
Ms. Lynn Weinstein
Digital Acquisitions Librarian
Interim Liaison Librarian Business, Economics and Metro
202.319.5389
weinstel@cua.edu

Course goals
One of the School’s educational goals is to foster the skills necessary to complete a major capstone project. Conducting research gives the student the opportunity to experience an “individualized” apprenticeship in scholarship and to acquire the skills necessary to succeed in both professional and private endeavors. The capstone project will be the most challenging, imaginative and creative facet of the student’s academic experience.

Students should consider the capstone project as an academic approach to business problem solving. The steps in problem solving can be divided into five distinct parts, similar to the five basic chapters of a thesis: Recognize the problem; Form a methodology for a possible solution of the hypothesis; Gather data; Verify or test the hypothesis; and Form a summary.

This process of inquiry requires reflective study of an idea. The critical thinking required to solve the research question is fundamentally important.

Goals for student learning
At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of and skills in applying the concepts, traditions, approaches, methodologies and methods of the selected business research methodology employed.
- Demonstrate understanding of the structure of research and the application of it in either qualitative and/or quantitative traditions.
- Demonstrate skills in applying the research design steps from problem posing to proposal, from approval through implementation and reporting.
- Develop skills in presenting and discussing one’s research and results in a public environment consisting of colleagues, students and administrators.
• Demonstrate skills in the use of writing style and format requirements of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.). http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Course requirements
Please make a note of our schedule posted on Bb. There are classes that are MANDATORY and have REQUIRED ATTENDANCE and if you are going to miss these classes, you will NOT pass the course. Please mark these dates. This course will only utilize Blackboard as the platform for assignments, syllabus changes and other issues pertaining to the course. Therefore, students must have a University e-mail account in order to participate in this course.

Each student is required to complete a project associated with his or her work, or career aspirations. The project should be valuable to the employer and allow the student to demonstrate his or her research and writing skills in the work setting.

Working with the instructor, students will identify a topic for analysis, identify research in that specific or related subject area, develop alternative approaches to a situation; recommend and justify a course of action, and suggest an implementation plan.

Grades are based upon the quality of research, as well as a project that is clearly written, demonstrates critical thinking and analytical skills, and contains master’s level logic and coherency. It is expected that the final paper will average 30 pages in length. NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED! NO EXCEPTIONS!

In addition to the written component of the project, each student is required to present an oral presentation of the project.

Writing Assignments
All written assignments must be prepared in a professional manner. All final projects must be typed and free of grammatical or spelling errors. Projects, which, in the judgment of the instructor, do not meet these criteria or are unprofessionally prepared, will be returned ungraded for revision and resubmission. When including citations in the text and making references to resources, use the APA format. Assignments are expected to be reflective and include analysis/synthesis of knowledge and practical applications. Appropriate citations of literature and class readings should be included. Please keep a copy (disk or hard copy) of everything and record your work in the course for future reference.

All assignments must be submitted to the satisfaction of the instructor, on time, and in the manner and form required in the syllabus in order to receive credit. NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED.

Failure to complete any assignment on time will result in zero points. Please see Blackboard for writing assignment guidelines.

Expectations and policies:

Academic integrity
Academic integrity is not merely avoiding plagiarism or cheating, but it certainly includes those things. More than anything, having academic integrity means taking responsibility for your work, your ideas, and your effort, and giving credit to others for their work, ideas and effort. If you submit work that is not your own – whether test answers, whole papers or something in-between – I have a responsibility to hold you accountable for that action. I also have a responsibility to treat you with respect and dignity while doing so.

Academic honesty is expected of all CUA students. Faculty are required to initiate the imposition of sanctions when they find violations of academic honesty, such as plagiarism, improper use of a student’s own work, cheating, and fabrication. The following sanctions are presented in the University procedures related to Student Academic Dishonesty (from http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrityprocedures.cfm): “The presumed sanction for undergraduate students for academic dishonesty will be failure for the course. There may be circumstances, however, where, perhaps because of an undergraduate student’s past record, a more serious sanction, such as suspension or expulsion, would be appropriate. In the context of graduate studies, the expectations for academic honesty are greater, and therefore the presumed sanction for dishonesty is likely to be more severe, e.g., expulsion. In the more unusual case, mitigating circumstances may exist that would warrant a lesser sanction than the presumed sanction.”

Please review the complete texts of the University policy and procedures regarding Student Academic Dishonesty, including requirements for appeals, at http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrity.cfm and
At times, I may ask you to do group work for your presentation and your individual project. For that specific assignment, you are allowed to share material, ideas and information; however, for any related work that is to be submitted on an individual basis, I expect your submission to be your own in its entirety.

For more information about what academic integrity means at CUA, including your responsibilities and rights, visit http://integrity.cua.edu.

**Accommodations for students with disabilities**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Support Services. Please contact Disability Support Services by email at dss.cua.edu, or call 202-319-5211 to make an appointment to discuss reasonable accommodations. DSS is located in PRYZ 127.

**Other policies and expectations:**

**Attendance**
The instructor believes that an essential part of the class design is the classroom experience. Your attendance is required for all scheduled class meetings, for the entire class time, and you are responsible for information covered in assigned readings, handouts, discussions, and activities. Attendance is stressed because you will have opportunities to a) improve your knowledge base through discussions of critical topics and issues, (b) practice skills needed to engage in professional dialogue and exchange with colleagues, (c) practice skills required to present information to others, (d) participate in discussions and activities, and (e) submit required assignments.

Therefore, excessive student absences will have a detrimental effect on learning and grades.

**ATTENDANCE AT THE FINAL CLASS PRESENTATION ON APRIL 27 IS MANDATORY.**

Students who arrive late are a disruption to the instructor and other students. Please be punctual!

The University’s attendance policy does not allow for the instructor to withdraw a student for excessive absences. The student must initiate the withdrawal process.

**Preparation**

Students are expected to come to class meetings thoroughly prepared. “Thoroughly Prepared” means having reviewed material from previous meetings and having read readings sufficiently to participate actively and effectively.

**Participation**

Students are to be prepared to participate in class discussions and activities. Preparation for those discussions implies that all assigned work is read and completed in accordance with the deadlines outlined in the Syllabus and Schedule.

Equally important, participation through the sharing of each student’s research during class discussions will expand and support the knowledge of other students in the course.

**Discussion Guidelines**

The discussion always starts with a question that all members understand, then: People will participate at different levels which is permitted within class and time limits; Some level of participation is expected of everyone; Domination of the conversations by one or two people is unacceptable; Let people finish their thoughts – do not interrupt; When someone is talking listen to what they are saying – concentrate on what they are saying rather than formulating a response; Separate the person from the opinion; Divergent views are encouraged – assume that everyone may have a piece of the truth; Asking for and giving the basis for a view or observation is encouraged; Debating the goodness, badness or right, wrong of a position is discouraged: and Share, rotate roles and responsibilities for discussion management within the group.

Personal attacks will not be tolerated! Anyone may remind anyone else, including reminding the instructor, if violations of the ground rules occur.

**Controversial Course Content**
There may be times when legitimate class discussions, assignments, or media resources deal with issues, images or symbols that are viewed as controversial by some class members. This is unavoidable in a course that comprehensively deals with contemporary issues and themes. The student should be aware that some materials covered in class might be perceived as offensive to his or her individual sensibilities.

Civility
It is assumed that respect for the CUA community and its rules as well as respect for the rights of others are standards for all CUA students. Each student is expected to act with civility. Freedom of expression is an essential part of the University life, but it does not include intimidation, belligerence, threats of violence, or the inducement of others to engage in violence or in conduct that harasses or is disrespectful of others. Conduct that threatens, harasses, or denigrates others for any reason is unacceptable and will be dealt with severely. Proper social conduct includes not only civil behavior in interacting with members of the University community both within and outside of the classroom, but also respect for University facilities and property. If each member of the class lives up to these standards, the members of the class can be confident that everyone will benefit fully from the diversity found here. Civil behavior also includes good manners.

*Please turn off cell phones during class. This means YOU!*  

Disruptive Behavior
Behavior that is disruptive to the instructor or students is contrary to quality education. Should the instructor determine that an individual student’s verbal or nonverbal behavior is hampering another student’s ability to understand or concentrate on the class material, the instructor will speak with that student in an effort to rectify the problem behavior. If the behavior continues after this discussion, the instructor will have the disruptive student leave the class. Permission to return to class may be dependent upon assurances that the student has met with a responsible individual about the problem: a counselor, the Dean, etc.

*Children are not permitted in the classroom, and only students enrolled in the class are allowed to attend class.*

Academic support services:
The university’s primary academic support resources are located on the 2nd floor of the Pryzbyla Center. These affiliated offices and services include:

- **The Undergraduate Advising Center (UAC)** offers guidance to all undergraduates, especially first-year students, as they move toward their academic goals. The UAC is located in B 10 McMahon Hall. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm.  
  **Phone:** (202) 319-5545  
  **Email:** cua-advising@cua.edu  
  **Web:** advising.cua.edu

- **The Center for Academic Success (CAS)** provides academic support services for all students through a broad base of programs and services, including Tutoring Services, Workshops, Individual Skills Meetings, Peer Mentoring, and more. CAS is located at Mullen Library Second Floor.  
  **Phone:** (202) 319-5655  
  **Email:** cua-academicsuccess@cua.edu  
  **Web:** success.cua.edu

- **The Writing Center** is an excellent resource for any student. The Writing Center is committed to supporting the writing needs of students at all stages of the writing process. If, at any point in the semester, you feel that you are struggling to draft, revise, or properly reference sources in a writing assignment, make an appointment at [http://english.cua.edu/wc](http://english.cua.edu/wc); we also welcome walk-in appointments at the Writing Center, which is located in 219 Mullen Library.  
  **Phone:** (202) 319-4286  
  **Email:** cua-writingcenter@cua.edu  
  **Web:** [english.cua.edu/wc/](http://english.cua.edu/wc/)

- **The Math Center** is staffed with Math Faculty and Tutors who are trained to assist students struggling in areas ranging from the basics to complex problems in calculus and statistics. Any student who feels he or she may need assistance in this or any other math class is welcome to visit the Math Center on Monday through Thursday between the hours of 4:00 and 10:00pm. No appointment is necessary and services are absolutely free. The Math Center is located at Mullen Library Second Floor.
The Office of Disability Support Services provides reasonable accommodations for the classroom and testing environment for students with documented disabilities. DSS is located in Pryz 127. Office hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 8:00am-5:00pm, and Tuesday and Thursday 8:00am -6:30pm.

Phone: (202) 319-5211 Email: cua-dss@cua.edu Web: dss.cua.edu

The Counseling Center provides free individual and group counseling services, psychiatric consultation, alternative testing, and emergency services to CUA students. In addition, we provide consultation services and outreach programs to the CUA community. Appointments can be scheduled in person in 127 O’Boyle Hall, or by phone.

Phone: (202) 319-5765. Web: counseling.cua.edu

Additionally students should take advantage of:

Career Services
The Office of Career Services provides programs, services and resources designed to encourage and assist students in the timely engagement in all aspects of career planning, experiential education, pursuit of post-baccalaureate educational opportunities, and job attainment. The office’s goal is to empower students to make career and educational choices facilitated by in-depth awareness of vocational interests, abilities, values, faith, and life goals. Through its efforts the office strives to provide students with the awareness and tools that will facilitate effective life-long career development activities. Located in Pryzbyla 127, telephone number 202-319-5623.

Fitness Center
The Eugene I. Kane Student Health and Fitness Center is located in the heart of residence housing. The 7000 square foot fitness center opened it’s doors in September 2004 with state of the art Precor Cardiovascular Equipment, a complete circuit of Nautilus weight machines, and a free weight area. The fitness center's mission is to provide students, who are studying at The Catholic University of America, the opportunity to maintain and develop healthy lifestyles. The center provides abdominal workouts, core training and conditioning as well as individual training programs for the students. Telephone number 202-319-5705

Assessment
Students will be evaluated based on the quality of work, especially the written final capstone project but also on completion of a draft proposal of the capstone project, journal article summaries, and public presentation the student’s research findings.

Capstone Proposal Form – 25 points
Six (6) sets of chapter discussion questions – 60 points total
Two (2) journal articles with summaries – 30 points total
Introduction Section – 25 points
Methodology Section – 40 points
Literature Review Section – 40 points
Draft of the Title Page, Introduction Section, Literature Review Section, Methodology Section, References, and Biography of the Author – 10 points
Results Section – 50 points
Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations Section – 40 points
Final Presentation and PowerPoint – 30 points
Discussion Board (Hybrid) - 50 points
Final Capstone Project – 100 points

Total Points: 500
A grade of “B” or higher must be earned for this course to be counted toward completion of the master’s degree program.

The assignment of INCOMPLETE GRADES is NOT ALLOWED for this course. Students must take responsibility to track their class performance!

University grades

Grading scale for Capstone Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Superior work</td>
<td>465-500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Excellent work</td>
<td>450-464.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Good work</td>
<td>435-449.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Satisfactory work</td>
<td>415-434.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Capstone learners must get a B or better!

Friday Capstone Course Schedule – See Schedule

The University grading system is available at http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad//gradesfull.cfm#II for undergraduates and http://policies.cua.edu/academicgrad//gradesfull.cfm#iii for graduate students.
Reports of grades in courses are available at the end of each term on http://cardinalstation.cua.edu.