

Masters Capstone Course

COMSTRAT 566

What is a Capstone Course?

A capstone course is a course offered in the final semester of a student's program of study that ties together the key learning objectives that faculty expect the student to have learned during the program.

Course Overview:

This course provides an in-depth opportunity for the student to demonstrate accomplishment of the full spectrum of what was learned during their program of study. The capstone course expectations are a display of a mastery of learning and the ability to apply it to new, unusual and integrated project requirements.

Successful students of Washington State University's Online Masters Communications Programs must not only have a broad foundation in the communication discipline's literature, its theories and strategies, but also must apply that knowledge successfully. A WSU's Online Masters Communications student must be able to write well, speak intelligently, communicate visually, develop a sense of aesthetics, and demonstrate creative expression. Faculty expectations are that students will use their knowledge and the information gathered to plan, design and produce original projects that integrate the various types of expression.

This capstone course is based on applied communication. Students are presented with a new problem and must utilize their knowledge, experience, and abilities to plan and research various solutions to the problem and then correctly apply the chosen solution as an effective way to meet the purpose and goal of the problem.

Course Learning Goals:

The goal of this course is to allow each student to demonstrate their mastery of what was learned in Washington State University's Online Masters Communications Programs. According to Bloom's Taxonomy, learning outcomes have been categorized into three distinct areas:

1. *Cognitive*: mental skills (*Knowledge*)
2. *Affective*: growth in feelings or emotional areas (*Attitude*)
3. *Psychomotor*: manual or physical skills (*Skills*)

Based on this taxonomy, the following core competencies will be assessed in this course:

1. *Communication competence*: The ability to read, write, speak, and listen and to use these processes effectively to acquire, develop, and convey ideas and information.
2. *Critical thinking*: The ability to examine issues rationally, logically, and coherently.
3. *Contextual competence*: The understanding of the societal context or environment in which one is living and working.
4. *Aesthetic sensibility*: An enhanced aesthetic awareness of arts and human behavior for both personal enrichment and application in the enhancement of work.
5. *Professional identity*: A concern for improving the knowledge, skills, and values of the profession.
6. *Professional ethics*: An understanding of the ethics of a profession as standards that guide professional behavior.
7. *Adaptive competence*: Anticipating, adapting to, and promoting changes important to a profession's societal purpose and the professional's role.
8. *Leadership capacity*: Exhibiting the capacity to contribute as a productive member of the profession and assuming appropriate leadership roles.
9. *Scholarly concern for improvement*: Recognizing the need to increase knowledge and to advance the profession through both theoretical and applied research.
10. *Motivation of continued learning*: Exploring and expanding personal, civic, and professional knowledge and skills through a lifetime.

General Evaluation Rubric

<i>Cognitive Learning</i>	Course Expectations
Recall of Knowledge Comprehension Application Analysis Synthesis Evaluation	In this capstone course the student will draw upon their knowledge and research to create a portfolio of work along with professional communication items to advance in their career of choice.
<i>Affective Learning</i>	
Receiving Responding Valuing Organization	The portfolio and communication items created approach will reflect attitudes, values, feelings and beliefs characteristic of the communication discipline and profession.

<i>Psychomotor Learning</i>	
Gross Bodily Movements Finely Coordinated Movements Non-verbal Communication Speech Behaviors	The students will create a tangible portfolio of work and present that work in competent and professional manner.

Adopted from: <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html>, <http://www.bloomstaxonomy.org/>, <http://users.etown.edu/m/moorerc/capstone.html>

Textbook:

None

Software:

Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, In-Design, Premiere & other content creation software may be used in the creation of the portfolio and other professional communication correspondence items. You will also need access to a webcam and a Skype account (it is free).

Deliverables:

1. Resume/CV (3)
2. Cover Letter (3)
3. Portfolio (3)
4. Attention Device (3)
5. Remote Interview (1)

Required Work:

Project 1: Find a position at a Fortune 500 company using publicly available sources that interests you. Based on the job description, company culture and other relevant information craft a cover letter, resume, and digital portfolio of work to apply for that position. In addition, you will create a unique attention getting device that will get your application package recognized above the clutter.

Project 2: Find a position at a medium or small business using publicly available sources that interests you. Based on the job description, company culture and other relevant information craft a cover letter, resume, and digital portfolio of work to apply for that position. In addition, you will create a unique attention getting device that will get your application package recognized above the clutter.

Project 3: Create an ideal position (dream job) that interests you. Based on the created job description, described company culture and other relevant information craft a cover letter, resume, and digital portfolio of work to apply for that position. In addition, you will create a unique attention getting device that will get your application package recognized above the clutter and complete a remote interview for the position.

Feedback (critiques):

Peer critiques will be used in this course to provide feedback and help you improve your skills. On the day of the assignment deadline, all project materials must be posted to the share point. From the date posted to up to five days following the assignment deadline each student is required to meaningfully critique each piece of work. A meaningful comment will be something substantive about form, style and content.

Instructor Interaction:

I will be active in the course space afternoons from 3-4 p.m. (Pacific time). You can expect responses to emails or questions received outside of these times during my next “office hour.”

Late Work Policy:

Work (homework, projects, etc) will be due at 11:59 p.m. on the due date. Late work will be accepted the following day, but will lose one full grade. Work turned in after that time will lose one full letter grade for each business day it is late.

Grading Procedure:

Each assignment and project will be graded on the quality of your output...this is a creative class so I will be using the qualitative method to evaluate your work. If you have any questions about what is expected for any assignment please ask.

Generally, in this class, a grade of D means “below that which is acceptable or satisfactory”; a grade of C means “acceptable or satisfactory”; a grade of B means “substantially good work well beyond the level of acceptable or satisfactory”; and a grade of A means “uniformly excellent work well beyond that which is required”.

Good grammar, proper spelling and good form are expected. Assignments and projects with errors will be docked accordingly. Assignments will be graded on a scale of 0-10. Zero is the lowest and represents no credit and ten is the highest (best) you can earn. Projects will receive a percentage grade from 0-100% and will be evaluated against the requirements of the projects.

Grading:

Course Work	Points	Percent of Final Grade
Online Critiques (3 at 33.3 each)	Each worth up to 33.3 points (100 points max)	10%
Group Project #1	300	30%
Group Project #2	300	30%

Group Project #2	300	30%
	Total: 1000 Points	Total: 100%

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A	93–100%	C	73–76%
A–	90–92%	C–	70–72%
B+	87–89%	D+	67–69%
B	83–86%	D	60–66%
B–	80–82%	F	0–59%
C+	77–79%		

Incomplete Grade Policy:

Incompletes are granted only with permission of the instructor and are subject to the following guidelines:

1. Students must request an incomplete in writing or by e-mail from the instructor before the end of the semester.
2. The request must be signed and dated by the student (or identified by student's e-mail address), and must explain the reasons behind the request for the incomplete.
3. In order to be considered for an incomplete, **there are two main conditions:**
 - A student must complete a minimum amount of the assigned course work. Specifically, a student must complete 75 percent of the course work.
 - A student must have a mathematical possibility of passing the class. A passing grade is 60 percent or above for the entire course.
4. If extraordinary circumstances (e.g., family emergency, serious illness) are involved and are documented to the instructor's satisfaction, the instructor retains the discretion to grant an incomplete even if the minimum conditions outlined in item 3 above are not met.

If an incomplete is granted, the standard WSU policy applies (i.e., ALL work must be completed within one full year from the end of the enrollment semester at issue. Otherwise, an automatic grade of "F," or failing, will be entered on the student's transcript).

Academic Regulations:

Students enrolled in distance courses are subject to the same WSU academic regulations as on-campus students. A complete listing of the WSU academic regulations is available online ([Academic Regulations](#); select "Printable" next to "List All Academic Regulations" to view a printable list of all regulations).

Disability Accommodations:

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. DDP and the Disability Resource Center (DRC) work together to provide reasonable accommodations for students who have documented disabilities and who are registered both with DDP and the DRC. DDP's liaison to the DRC will assist you in getting started. To begin this process, contact DDP (800-222-4978 or distance@wsu.edu). We strongly recommend that you notify us as soon as possible. All accommodations must be approved through the Disability Resource Center.

If you have questions, please contact the DRC at DRC.FrontDesk@ad.wsu.edu or 509-335-3417. Additional information is available on the DRC website: <http://www.drc.wsu.edu>.

Online Collaboration:

Threaded discussion posts in online course spaces are an integral part of online learning environments. In certain courses, assessment of discussion posts is included as part of the final grade.

WSU is committed to the rights of all community members to freedom of expression and academic freedom. In order to protect the rights of all participants and to preserve the educational tone of online course spaces, the following rules apply:

1. Postings must be germane to the subject matter.
2. Postings must comply with WSU's policy on appropriate use of computing resources: <http://www.wsu.edu/ElectronicPolicy.html>.
3. Illegal postings or postings that violate WSU policies, including those regarding harassment and discrimination or the Standards of Conduct for Students, are not permitted.
4. Postings that are threatening to others are not permitted.

Instructors have the authority to remove posts that violate these rules. Continued postings in violation of these rules may result in removal of access rights, course failure, and, when appropriate, referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

In addition to the netiquette guidelines for online collaboration, you will be expected to participate in the online discussions in a way that engages with the topic and with the other participants. An overview of the criteria used in this course to evaluate your participation through your original and response posts is provided in the online course space, if applicable.

Technical Support:

If you need technical assistance, please expand the **Content** folder in the Map menu on the left by clicking the plus sign (+), then select **Technical Support**.

DDP Student Help Centers,

DDP understands that navigating the academic world may be confusing – that is why we have created the DDP [Help Centers](#), a central location where students can find information on a variety of topics. Take a moment to check out the many links available in the various help

centers. Below are just a few important links to information in the help centers we would like to bring to your attention:

- Please review "Tuition & Fees" in the [Finance Center](#). Tuition is due on the first day of the semester, and WSU does not mail billing statements.
- If you are a new DDP student, information to assist you with online learning is available under "Resources and Tips" in the [New DDP Students Center](#). In this section you will find study tips, resources, and skills to give you a good head start in assuring success with your course.
- Also check out [myDDP](#), your personal DDP Web page where you can find quick links to important information, upcoming DDP events, deadlines and more. The quick link "Go to myDDP" is available from every page in the help centers, found in the upper right part of the page.

Library Support:

All students enrolled in Washington State University distance courses can use the WSU Libraries online databases and receive reference and research assistance from the Distance Degree Library Services (DDLs). Enrolled students can also borrow books and other circulating material and receive photocopies of journal articles.

Visit the DDLs Web page ([DDLs](#)) for links to the WSU online database and library support information.

eTutoring:

As a WSU student you have **unlimited FREE** access to eTutoring.org, a tutoring platform that enables students and tutors to collaborate in an online environment. This is not a course requirement, but simply an available resource that you may utilize as needed.

Currently, eTutoring is available for Accounting, Anatomy & Physiology, Biology, Chemistry, Math and Calculus, MS Office 2007, Spanish, Statistics, and Writing! With three ways to access a tutor you can choose the one that best fits your needs...

- Use the Online Writing Lab that allows students to submit a draft of a paper to a tutor, ask for specific feedback, and receive a tutor's response within 24-48 hours.
- Access live eTutoring via eChat that allows students to meet with a tutor in one-on-one tutoring sessions via a fully interactive, virtual online environment.
- Utilize the offline eQuestions that allow students to leave a specific question for an eTutor, who will respond within 24-48 hours.

The list of available tutoring subjects can be found on the <http://etutoring.org/login.cfm?institutionid=176> site.

For more information on accessing and setting up your eTutoring account, visit: http://online.wsu.edu/current_students/as_eTutoring_start.aspx

DDP Academic Calendar:

Please review the current DDP [Academic Calendar](#) to become familiar with critical deadlines.

On Campus Safety:

Washington State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for its faculty, staff, and students. Safety is the responsibility of every member of the campus community and individuals should know the appropriate actions to take when an emergency arises. In support of our commitment to the safety of the campus community the University has developed a Campus Safety Plan, <http://safetyplan.wsu.edu>. It is highly recommended that you visit this web site as well as the University emergency management web site at <http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies> to become familiar with the information provided.

		Course Outline		
Week	Topic	Learning Goals	Online Learning Modules	Assignment Due
Week 1	Introduction of Class. What are the expectations for the course?	Understand the requirements of a capstone course.	View Learning Module #1	
Week 2	Job hunting, networking, company selection, search services, & researching companies.	Understand how to search for a position, learn about a company and network with peers to increase job search success.	View Learning Module #2	
Week 3	Understanding corporate culture, crafting an effective job application strategy, & preparing your application.	Understand how corporate culture, job posting, hiring managers, channels used and other factors impact a successful job search.	View Learning Module #3	

Week 4	Cover letter writing and resume preparation	Understand how to craft an effective cover letter and resume for successful job searching.	View Learning Module #4	
Week 5	Portfolio preparation	Understand how to craft an effective digital and physical portfolio for successful job searching.	View Learning Module #5	
Week 6	Interviewing techniques	Understand how modern interviews are conducted and learn how to interview effectively	View Learning Module #6	
Week 7	Project 1 Preparation			
Week 8	Project 1 Due	Practice effective job application strategy.		Project 1 Due
Week 9	Peer Critiques			Peer Critiques
Week 10	Project 1 Feedback	Improve application process.	View Online Critiques	
Week 11	Project 2 Preparation			

Week 12	Project 2 Due	Practice effective job application strategy.		Project 2 Due
Week 13	Project 2 Feedback	Improve application process.		Peer Critiques
Week 14	Project 3 Preparation		View Online Critiques	
Week 15	Project 3 Due	Practice an effective job application process.		Project 3 Due