The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley  
College of Liberal Arts  
Department of Public Affairs and Security Studies  
Master of Public Administration Program  
PAFF 6362 – Past, Present, Future.  
Summer 2019 Module II  
June 19- August 7, 2019

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

**Instructor:** Aziza Zemrani, PhD  
**Office:** College of Liberal Arts  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays from 12:00-2:00 PM (CT)  
Virtual Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays & Mondays from 7:00 PM-8:00 PM (CT)  
*Skype: Available all days when connected. Create your account (Check course site) as well Blackboard collaborate Ultra*  
Do not hesitate to send me an email if we need to talk so we can agree on a convenient time for a phone call, Connect session, or a meeting.  
**Office Telephone:** 956-665-7845 (Always leave a message with phone number and will get back with you on a timely fashion)  
**E-mail:** aziza.zemrani@utrgv.edu

Instructional Connections: Mike Braun  
Generally, we will respond to emails within [24 hours] of receiving them. If we plan to be away from our computer for more than a couple of days, we will let you know in advance. Any technical questions can be referred to Blackboard Support.  
I will update the online grades each time a grading session has been complete—typically [2-3 days] following the completion of an activity. You will see a visual indication of new grades posted on your Blackboard home page under the link to this course.

**Service Learning Course**

This course is designed to have “hands-on real-world problems” to solve using community based organizations.

**What's it all about?**

The application of all acquired knowledge, skills, and competencies to solve real-world problems for a community organization.

Developing and demonstrating leadership skills, communication skills (verbal and written), and cultural competency skills by working in teams and using leadership instruments to overcome obstacles to successful learning in a diverse world.
COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course Description:

This course is the research Capstone course to the Masters in Public Administration degree. It is a review and synthesis of the profession and practices of public administration. This Capstone course is developed around real-world, client-based projects that require the student to draw upon areas of knowledge and expertise from a broad spectrum of subject areas covered in the MPA course of study. Students work with an assigned organization (client) to identify and address an issue or problem in the organization and provide then with an appropriate formal report or recommendation. Detailed step-by-step instructions are provided on the Blackboard course site.

Prerequisite

The Capstone is the EXIT course for the online MPA degree program. You should have completed, be currently enrolled in a total of at least 18 credit hours, or have special permission from the Instructor of Records to enroll in this course. The basic organization of the course is: (1) a general introductory refresher from previous courses (2) Writing the proposal, (3) Putting together, (4) and finally presentation of the final report.

This course uses the Engagement Zone as a platform for the Service Learning component.

In PAFF 6362-01V Past, Present, Future, you will complete a service learning assignment. The assignment will allow you to utilize what you learn in the classroom to address a community need. After the project’s completion, you will reflect on the impact your project made in the community.

This module, the university is using a new platform to track engagement. The portal, Engagement Zone, connects students with volunteer and service learning opportunities happening across the Rio Grande Valley. The Engagement Zone has a few functions. It allows organizations throughout the RGV to post volunteer needs that students can address, it connects classrooms to specific needs of their course, and it’s a place to find details about happenings.

Our course will use the Engagement Zone to track your service learning project. To enroll in our service learning course, you will need to use the link associated with your course section.

http://ez.utrgv.edu/slm/course/join/7csf2914w/12df3c610c00/

Please register for our service learning course by clicking the link above. We will discuss the service learning project via a scheduled Blackboard Collaborate session on Monday June 17, 2019 @ 6:00 PM (CT)
TEXTBOOK & COURSE MATERIALS

Required Text


Recommended Texts & Other Readings


(3) Additional readings, chapters, notes and lectures available electronically on Blackboard.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

(1) develop their research proposal using research methods and design, theories, concepts;
(2) demonstrate critical thinking skills applied to real world case scenario;
(3) demonstrate their skills linking research, public, social and societal needs and public service;
(4) practice the core competencies needed in professional public administration, including communication skills, writing and presentation skills; critical thinking and an understanding the concepts of public service. Proficiency in these competencies will be needed in any administrative employment.

Specific Learning Objectives for Service Learning Designation

**Service Learning Project Guidelines**

**A. Purpose.**
Service Learning is built in the capstone course. Students work on a real-world project either submitted by an organization or at the student request or initiative. The students are given the opportunity to provide service and develop team skills and leadership skills. This service learning component of the MPA program is an integrated part of the curriculum and contributes to the community’s development. The real-world project is used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.

**B. Student benefits.**
The Service Learning Project fulfills the requirement of the EXIT option in the graduate program. Students learn to set goals, investigate their career interests, their character strengths and values using the
Kozai Self-assessment tool “the Intercultural Effectiveness scale”. Based on this information, students develop three journal entries using their results and create an action plan for their career goals and reflect on their community partner that is contributing to their area of career interest. Students will encounter social problems and issues and may have their eyes open to new perspective of the world.

C. Community Benefits.
Community partners are identified either by the student or the Engagement Zone, or as a response to a letter sent out to some community organizations, public, and nonprofit.

D. Reflection.
Student learning is more productive through the process of action and reflection. This provides more critical thinking and an opportunity for cooperative learning when working in a team. As previously stated, students work on a personal journal with three entries and very structured questions. A fourth journal entry is added using the community Engagement Zone platform.

E. Outcome.
Student Teams will present their research through Blackboard collaborate and invite the organization to observe.

You will meet the objectives listed above through a combination of the following activities in this course:

- Complete all activities as assigned by the instructor,
- Participate and contribute to online discussion,
- Complete all assignments,
- Complete and pass research report presentation,
- Complete the journal entry in the engagement zone platform.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Computer Hardware
To participate in this online course, you should have easy access to a computer less than 5-years old with high-speed internet connection via cable modem, LAN or DSL. To ensure you are using a supported browser and have required plug-ins please refer to Supported Browsers, Plugins [Hyperlink](http://kb.blackboard.com/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=72810639)& Supported Operating Systems for Blackboard Learn from Blackboards resource page.

Student Technical Skills
You are expected to be proficient with installing and using basic computer applications and have the ability to send and receive email attachments.

Software
Mozilla’s Firefox (latest version; Macintosh or Windows)
Google Chrome (latest version; Macintosh or Windows)

Apple’s QuickTime plug-in (latest version). A free download is available at

Virus protection UTRGV Software link

Microsoft Office UTRGV Software link

List other tools, resources, and materials needed by the student for success in the course.

Engagement zone website

Technical Assistance
If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Blackboard you can:

Visit the Blackboard [Student Help Site]
Submit a Blackboard Helpdesk Ticket

COLTT Help Desk Contact Information (UTRGV’s Blackboard Support)
Location: Education Building Room 2.202
Phone: 956-665-5327
Monday – Thursday 7:30AM – 7:00PM
Friday: 7:30 AM – 6:00PM

COURSE ORGANIZATION & ONLINE TOOLS

Course Structure:
This course will be delivered entirely online through the course management system Blackboard Learn. You will use your UTRGV account to login to the course from the My UTRGV site and under applications click on Blackboard Learn.

The course is organized into 7 weeks of instruction, as outlined in the Course Schedule and Due Dates below. Each week is listed by its main topic and contains required readings, videos, mini lectures, discussion forum assignments, framework assignments, and collaborative assignments that you complete working in teams.

Note: Most materials used in conjunction with the course are subject to copyright protection.

Discussion Forums
You will find the following discussion forums in the course Blackboard site:

    General Help: Post any questions or comments you may have about course mechanics or technical issues to this forum.

    Forums related to collaborative and discussion assignments, as described in Learning Module sections.

Forums versus Email
If you have a question about course content or mechanics, I encourage you to post it to the General Help discussion forums. Doing so gives students in the course an opportunity to help one another and allows everyone to benefit from answers to your questions. Of course, don’t hesitate to email me directly if your concern is of a personal nature.

My role in discussion forums is that of a facilitator. I will occasionally correct misconceptions and/or redirect conversations that need redirecting. I may also post comments following the completion of discussion indicating my general impressions of the comments and conclusions.

Assignments
Unless indicated otherwise in Weekly materials, you will work in groups or teams as will be announced at the beginning of the module, individual assignments are done through the journal log throughout the session.

Collaborate
In addition to the learning activities noted above, I will also hold live sessions using Collaborate Ultra during the Module at dates and times to be announced. For more information about Collaborate, visit Blackboards website Collaborate Handouts for Participants.

All Interactions with the organization need to be made through Blackboard collaborate and need to be recorded in the Engagement Zone platform.

TOPIC OUTLINE/SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

Note about calendar/schedule. The schedule for weekly activities is in each week with a very structured outline of the chapters covered, the assignments, discussion, research, and assessments. This schedule/calendar is for you to have a clear idea of what will be covered.

All Deadlines, submissions details, instructions for assignments are in the weekly module and can be found in the course under “Weekly Scheduled Activities” attached below the syllabus.

Grading Policy

Graded Course Activities

Description of the grading policies is summarized in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team charter</td>
<td>C/I</td>
<td>C/I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Profile</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proposal (2 ATTEMPTS)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation [discussion + wiki+ file exchange within group+ Engagement Zone]</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final product</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Log (3)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Charter Individual</td>
<td>C/I</td>
<td>C/I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final grades assigned for this course will be based on the percentage of total points earned and are assigned as follows as in the table above.

A = 90-100%
B = 80-89%
C = 70-79%
F = Below 70%

Late Work Policy

Be sure to pay close attention to deadlines—there will be no make-up assignments or quizzes, or late work accepted without a serious and compelling reason and instructor approval. Most activities are within a group and as such no exception allowed and the instructor needs to be informed by email through the group to inform the professor of any issue or problem in the group.

Viewing Grades in Blackboard

Points you receive for graded activities will be posted to the Blackboard Grade Book. Click on the My Grades link on the left navigation to view your points.

Your instructor will update the online grades each time a grading session has been complete—typically 3-5 days following the completion of an activity. You will see a visual indication of new grades posted on your Blackboard home page under the link to this course.

Naming and Submitting Documents

Before you submit a document, name your file according to the format below. Avoid special characters and spaces in file names. Use a single underline _ to separate words.

The name of your...
...should follow the format:
Example:
Any assignment or document to be submitted
LastNameFirstName_Initial_Essay.doc
SmithJ_Essay.doc

Course Policies

Participation
Online courses require your active participation. Here are some tips for success:

In discussion forums, you learn from one another by posing questions, justifying your comments, and providing multiple perspectives. When you prepare for discussions through thoughtful reflection, you contribute to your own successful learning experience as well as to the experience of your peers.

Log in to the course frequently (at least several times per week and to be on the safe side daily for this accelerated program) and check the announcements. This will keep you apprised of any course updates, progress in discussions, assignment information, and messages requiring immediate attention.

Be aware of and keep up with the Course Schedule in the Weekly Calendar for activities.

Participate in team activities to the best of your ability. How well your team does—and how well you do—depend on all the team members working cooperatively. Use the Leadership survey to assess your leadership style that will help you be successful in this course and be productive.

Participation in an online course is measured through the above components and in addition any required Blackboard collaborate Session will count toward the grade as a bonus.

As the instructor of record, and the help of the assigned coach (es) for this course, we do monitor, track, and/or score student participation, through the Monitoring tool in Blackboard tracking tool.

**Build Rapport**

If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let your instructor know as early as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure that you are proactive in informing your instructor when difficulties arise during the semester so that we can help you find a solution.

**Complete Assignments**

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Blackboard unless otherwise instructed. Assignments and discussions must be submitted by the given deadline or special permission must be requested from instructor before the due date. Extensions will not be given beyond the next assignment except under extreme circumstances.

**Communication Skills**

All students must have adequate writing skills to communicate content in a professional and concise manner. Students must be proficient in their written presentations including strategies for developing ideas, citing scholarly references, writing style, wording, phrasing, and using language conventions. Students must follow APA guidelines, use non-racist and non-sexist language, and include sufficient references to support their thesis and ideas in the paper.

**Time Commitment**

Online courses are typically just as time intensive, and may be more rigorous than traditional courses. Many students claim that online courses require more time and commitment. As you begin this course,
you would be wise to schedule 8 or more hours per week for studying materials and completing assignments.

Falling behind in this course is particularly problematic because the concepts we cover are cumulative. This means that not becoming proficient with information and objectives presented and assessed in a particular week can lead to low scores for that week as well as in subsequent weeks.

**Understand When You May Drop This Course**

It is the student’s responsibility to understand when they need to consider de-enrolling from a course. Refer to the UTRGV Course Schedule for dates and deadlines for registration. After this period, a serious and compelling reason is required to drop from the course. Serious and compelling reasons includes: (1) documented and significant change in work hours, leaving student unable to attend class, or (2) documented and severe physical/mental illness/injury to the student or student’s family.

**Incomplete Policy**

Under emergency/special circumstances, students may petition for an incomplete grade. An incomplete will only be assigned if you have completed at least 65%. All incomplete course assignments must be completed within the last two weeks of the module.

**Inform Your Instructor of Any Accommodations Needed**

If you have a documented disability and verification from the Office of Disability Services, and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. It is the student’s responsibility to provide documentation of the disability to Disability Services and meet with a SSWD counselor to request special accommodation before classes start.

Disability Services is in room 322 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 316-7911 (Voice) (956) 316-7911 or via email at disabilityservices@UTRGV.edu.

**Commit to Integrity**

As a student in this course (and at this university) you are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning and participation in this class as well as integrity in your behavior in and out of the classroom.

**UTRGV Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures**

“The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. California State University, Sacramento expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades.”

Read more about UTRGV’s Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures

**Definitions**

At UTRGV, Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.
“Plagiarism is a form of cheating. At UTRGV, “plagiarism is the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own academic work offered for credit.”

Source: UTRGV HOP

Important Note: Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, may be reported to the office of student affairs.

Course policies are subject to change. It is the student’s responsibility to check Blackboard for corrections or updates to the syllabus. Any changes will be posted.