



# UT Tyler SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

PBHL 6350

Capstone Project – I

Credit Hours: 3

**Semester:** Fall **Year:** 2024  
**Class Day/Time:** By Appointment **Class Location:** By Appointment

**Instructor of Record:** Michael H. Kennedy, PhD, MHA, FACHE Instructor  
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Office Hours: Mondays from 6 – 9 pm; by appointment

**Course Description:** The Capstone Project is the culminating experience for MPH students and is a requirement for graduation in the MPH program. The capstone is an opportunity for students to work on public health practice projects that are of particular interest to them. The goal is for students to synthesize, integrate and apply the skills and competencies they have acquired to a public health problem that approximates a professional practice experience. In Capstone I, the student will develop the proposal and obtain instructor approval for the Capstone Project that will be carried out in Capstone II. The final project will reflect an integration and synthesis of core competencies specific to the disciplines of public health and one of its core disciplines (epidemiology, biostatistics, health policy and leadership, social and behavioral sciences, environmental health).

Students will have one of two options for proposed projects.

1. Practice-based option: A focus on a specific public health issue faced by the practice community. It can be an extension of the practicum experience that is outcome focused, either by increasing the complexity of the original practicum experience or another, separate outcome-based project.

2. Community-based research/project option: A Community-based research project that investigates a scientific question using public health methods; a systematic review to investigate a specific public health question using published studies; a policy analysis that involves the review and synthesis of data relevant to a defined public health policy or practice issue; or a quality improvement project.

**Prerequisite:** All core MPH courses or permission of the instructor of record and program director

**Co-requisite:** None

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLO or “course objective”):**

1. Critically analyze literature relevant to the proposed Capstone project
2. Write formal background and rationale, objectives, and methods for proposed Capstone project
3. Demonstrate core specific knowledge in the write up of the proposal
4. As necessary, effectively gain Institutional Review Board approval for the proposed Capstone project
5. Effectively provide an oral presentation of the proposed Capstone project to a professional audience

Subject-specific Skills:

None.

**Course Assessment/Methods of Evaluation:**

Written project proposal (10-15 pages)

Oral presentation (15-20 minutes)

The instructor will inform the student of the method of course assessment and standard for passing the course. Progression to final presentation of proposed project is at the discretion of the instructor and based upon review and approval of the written capstone project proposal.

**Linked Program Learning Outcomes:**

The student learning outcomes listed above address the following MPH Program PLOs:

- PLO4 - The student will demonstrate proficiency in English communication in both oral (public speaking) and written forms as they pertain to conveying key concepts in public health.
- PLO6 - The student will demonstrate independent and critical thinking skills.

Student and instructor must agree upon student learning outcomes from at least two of the following PLOs:

- PLO1 - The student will demonstrate mastery in each of the five core knowledge areas in public health: Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Social & Behavioral Sciences, Health Policy and Management, and Environmental Health Sciences.
- PLO2 - The student will demonstrate proficiency in the four core functions of public health, as well as be able to explain the principles and interrelatedness of the ten essential public health services.
- PLO3 - The student will demonstrate proficiency in using multiple informational resources to gather, analyze, apply and report solutions to public health problems with a special emphasis on rural community health.
- PLO5 - The student will demonstrate proficiency in using computers and other forms of digital technology and media as they pertain to research, office management and public health issues.

**Textbook:**

None

**Course Content:**

- Develop and obtain instructor approval for project objectives
- Develop an outline that will guide the project proposal
- Critically analyze literature relevant to the proposed project
- Develop methods section for the proposed project
- Obtain any necessary Institutional Review Board approval
- Get approval for proposal site if necessary
- Write a full project proposal of 10 to 15 pages, inclusive of project description and objectives, location, and methods for carrying out the project
- Present a 15-20 minute oral presentation of the proposed project to a professional audience

**Other Class Policies:**

**Participation:**

Maintain regular communication with the Capstone instructor. Meet with Capstone instructor biweekly or as needed.

**Academic Honesty:**

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. 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.

*Cheating*

Dishonesty of any kind involving examinations, assignments, alteration of records, wrongful possession of examinations, and unpermitted submission of duplicate papers for multiple classes or unauthorized use of keys to examinations is considered cheating. Cheating includes but is not limited to:

- Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class.
- Falsifying or inventing any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise.
- Helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

*Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Materials, even ideas, borrowed from others necessitate full and complete acknowledgment of the original authors. Offering the work of another as one's own is plagiarism and is unacceptable in the academic community. A lack of adequate recognition constitutes plagiarism, whether it utilizes a few sentences, whole paragraphs, articles, books, audio-visual materials, or even the writing of a fellow student. In addition, the presentation of material gathered, assembled or formatted by others as one's own is also plagiarism. Because the university takes such misconduct very seriously, the student is urged to carefully read university policies on Misconduct in Research and Other Scholarly Activity 05.00. Examples of plagiarism are:

- Submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another.
- Submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source.
- Incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

**Adding/Dropping:**

The official deadline for adding and dropping courses is as published in the academic calendar and Graduate Bulletin (typically the day before Census Day). However, students are strongly encouraged to meet with their graduate advisor or the Program Coordinator prior to adding/dropping courses. Movement into and out of classes after the 4th class day requires approval of the Program Director. Students can drop until mid-semester without a WP or WF. Drops after mid-semester require approval of the Dean. Each student is responsible for their own enrollment status with the university.

**Disability Accommodations:**

SHP abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which mandate reasonable accommodations be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate provision of accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Student Services Office (located on the UT Tyler Campus). You may call 903-566-7079 for more information.

**Technology Support:** Information about the UT Tyler Help Desk, go to

<https://www.uttyler.edu/offices/technology-support/help/>

**Use of Artificial Intelligence:**

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

For This Course:

**AI is permitted only for specific assignments or situations, and appropriate acknowledgment is required.**

During some class assignments, we may leverage AI tools to support your learning, allow you to explore how AI tools can be used, and/or better understand their benefits and limitations. Learning how to use AI is an emerging skill, and we will work through the limitations of these evolving systems together. However, AI will be limited to assignments where AI is a critical component of the learning activity. I will always indicate when and where the use of AI tools for this course is appropriate.