URB 8110/8120 | MIS CAPSTONE RESEARCH PAPER

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Advisor: **A member of the Urban Studies Institute faculty, including affiliates**

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the MIS Capstone Research Paper is for students to undertake original research in a particular substantive area of Urban Studies. The Capstone Paper enables students to construct a piece of research, synthesizing current conceptual debates and empirical evidence from current literatures into a coherent exploration of a specific topic. Given the breadth and interdisciplinary nature of Urban Studies, a range of topics and methodological approaches are considered appropriate and students will have to scope to acquire new skills and advance their intellectual interests. Through the process of conducting the Capstone Paper, students will garner the ability to work independently, and in an adaptive manner, to complete a complex research program from start to finish.

Students opting for the Research Track will complete Masters Capstone Paper 1 and Masters Capstone Paper 2 (each for 3 credit hours). Students are expected to select a Capstone Advisor who is a member of the Urban Studies Institute, including affiliate faculty.

LEARNING OUTCOMES AND GOALS

At the completion of the Capstone Paper project, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Formulate a precise research question;
2. Apply the data collection and analytical skills developed through the MIS program to evaluate existing, and generate new knowledge, regarding a key challenge facing cities;
3. Identify and carry out data collection methods appropriate for their particular project;
4. Conduct an appropriate data analysis using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods approaches;
5. Interpret the results and findings in clear and concise terms;
6. Draw conclusions based on their findings, including identifying the relevance of their study for key stakeholders (academic and non-academic); and
7. Communicate their work effectively in writing and, where appropriate, through oral presentation and visualization techniques;

PREREQUISITES

Students are expected to have finished all courses in the MIS-Urban Studies core and be in good standing.

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
While there is flexibility to the structure and schedule of the Capstone Research Paper (at the discretion of the Capstone advisor), the general schedule and deadlines are as follows:

Prior to registering	Identify a research topic/question and confirm a Capstone Advisor
Weeks 1-2	Develop and submit proposal
Weeks 3-4	Design and submit work plan and bibliography
Weeks 5-12	Conduct primary data collection and analysis, prepare and submit a full draft
Weeks 13-15	Respond to feedback, finalize and submit final paper

Selecting a Research Topic and Advisor
Prior to registering for URB 8110/8120 credit, students should: (1) have a reasonably well-defined research topic or question in mind; and (2) demonstrate that an Urban Studies Institute faculty member (core or affiliate) has agreed to advise their paper. Students are encouraged to discuss their Capstone ideas with several faculty members and potential advisors to help develop and clarify their thinking. Students should also be aware faculty commitments may mean their preferred advisor is unable to take on their project. The choice of Capstone topic is the responsibility of the student (assisted by their Advisor).

Once a topic and advisor have been confirmed, students should **send a confirmation email** the Graduate Programs Director and Laura Viilo. They will then be given approval to register for URB 8110/8120.

Proposal
The proposal must describe your proposed research question(s) and how you hope to go about answering these questions. You should articulate an overarching research question and a limited number of related and researchable sub-questions. The proposal should describe the methodologies and data that you will be employing in the paper.

Work Plan and Bibliography
A **detailed work plan** that provides background on the research topic, clearly and specifically articulates the research questions, and identifies how you will go about addressing these questions, including describing the detailed research design and methods, any existing data that will be obtained, and any data to be collected.

A **bibliography** on your topic should demonstrate your (indicative) reading around the Capstone Paper project, including relevant formal scholarly literature and any applied "gray" literature, important media coverage, etc.

Full Draft
This should be a complete and coherent draft paper, and not a description or collection of preliminary results. While length may vary greatly depending on the type and nature of the paper, the general expectation on length is in the range of 5,000 to 7,000 words, plus tables, figures, and references.

Final Paper

Respond to review, comments, and edits of draft paper by instructor. Edit and proof the paper, including all appropriate formatting of text, tables, figures, and references, per Advisor. Submit final paper.

Evaluation and Grading

The student is the investigator and author of their Capstone Paper. Capstone Research Papers will be graded based on the assessment criteria detailed at the end of this document.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Honesty

All students are required to be familiar with the Academic Honesty policy of the university and to comply with the policy. This can be found in section 1350 of the graduate catalog. All work submitted must be completed in accordance with the Georgia State University's policies on academic honesty and integrity. The guidelines are posted at http://education.gsu.edu/files/2016/05/plagiarism.pdf and http://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/files/2013/2014-2015-Section-II-Academic-Conduct-Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf. If you are ever uncertain about these guidelines, please consult with your Advisor. Any work you submit must be your own and should be submitted for this course only. If you are found in violation of the University's academic honesty policies, the severest punishment will be pursued.

Students with Disabilities

Georgia State University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the Access and Accommodations Center at https://access.gsu.edu/. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all courses in which accommodation is sought within the first two weeks of classes. To register for accommodations please follow this link disability.gsu.edu/services/how-to-register. Phone: (404) 413-1560, Email: dismail@gsu.edu, Website: disability.gsu.edu. *Remote Academic Coaching.* The Office of Disability Services also offers free remote academic coaching. To learn more go to disability.gsu.edu/services or watch a Coaching Video

Veterans and Serving Military

Students who are veterans, serving in the military, their dependents, and the survivors of serving military are encouraged to avail themselves of a range of college services and activities through the Military Outreach Center (MOC). For assistance or guidance while attending GSU on campus or online, contact the Atlanta Campus Military Student Advocate, David Garcia, at 404-413-2331. Be sure and let your Advisor know ASAP if or when there is any possibility of you being activated and deployed. For more information, contact the GSU Military Outreach Center. Phone: (404) 413-233, Email: dgarcia9@gsu.edu Website: veterans.gsu.edu.

Basic Needs Statement

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable us to provide resources that we may possess. The Embark program at GSU provides resources for students facing homelessness and Panther's Pantry provides resources for students facing food insecurity.

Student Evaluation

Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.

Late Submission Policy

Assignments should be submitted by the listed deadlines. Late assignments will be accepted with a 10% penalty per day unless an explicit arrangement is agreed between Advisor and student.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR URBAN STUDIES MIS CAPSTONE RESEARCH PAPERS

	Failing	Poor	Passing	Adequate	Competent	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Exemplary	Excellent	Exceptional
	F 0-59	D 60-69	C- 70-71	C 72-77	C+ 78-79	B- 80-81	B 82-87	B+ 88-89	A- 90-91	A 92-97	A+ 98+
1) CORE KNOWLEDGE Research aims/ questions	Minimal or no grasp of area. No clearly specified research aims.	Slightly better than minimal grasp of subject area	Limited grasp of area with unclear research aims.	Some grasp of subject area & reasonable research aims.	Reasonable grasp of the subject area & feasible research aims.	Sound grasp of subject area and relevant research aims.	Solid grasp of subject area and clear, relevant research aims.	Through grasp of subject area with original research aims.	Strong grasp of subject area & significant research aims.	Impressive grasp of subject area & highly significant research aims.	Exceptional grasp of subject area; research aims equivalent to a journal article.
2) CORE KNOWLEDGE Literature review	Lack of evidence of reading.	Very limited reading.	Unclear argument w/ limited or irrelevant reading.	Limited or irrelevant reading.	Evidence of adequate relevant reading and basic grasp of literature	Evidence of reasonable relevant reading and satisfactory grasp of literature.	Evidence of plentiful relevant reading and sound grasp of literature.	Extensive reading with critical use of literature.	Substantial review & exemplary critical use of relevant literatures.	Impressive review & excellent critical use of relevant literatures.	Expert-level review & innovative synthesis suitable for a journal.
3) METHODS Research techniques	Minimal or no fieldwork or independent research. Serious flaws in use of methods.	Negligible fieldwork or independent research. Little familiarity w/methods or major flaws in use.	Limited fieldwork; Limited understanding of methods and flawed application.	Limited to basic fieldwork; Some understanding of methods but flawed or not entirely relevant.	Sufficient fieldwork and basic familiarity with appropriate methods.	Satisfactory fieldwork and expected familiarity with appropriate methods	Solid fieldwork and good level of familiarity with appropriate methods	Significant fieldwork and clear familiarity with appropriate methods	Substantial fieldwork and high ability in application of methods.	Impressive fieldwork or independent research. Innovative application & discussion of research techniques.	Exceptional form of fieldwork or independent research paired with an expert-level discussion of research techniques.
4) ANALYSIS and interpretation of evidence	Incoherent analysis w/ minimal knowledge to no grasp of core concepts.	Primarily descriptive analysis with no discussion.	Primarily descriptive analysis; limited, summary and discussion of findings.	Some understanding of key concepts and/or techniques but flawed discussion and analysis.	Reasonable critical analysis and discussion.	Sound critical analysis and discussion.	Solid critical analysis and meaningful discussion.	Thorough understanding of key concepts and techniques w/ high degree of skill in constructing an argument.	Original critical analysis and discussion.	Impressive critical analysis & highly significant discussion of findings.	Cutting edge analysis & subsequent discussion suitable for a journal.
5) COMMUNI-CATION and presentation	Confused, rambling or repetitive structure, absence of identifiable argument.	Confused and rambling structure leading to incoherent argument.	Confused or rambling structure with poor writing style and formatting.	Structure detracts sometimes from the argument. Adequate writing and formatting.	Structure infringes on the clarity of the argument. Competent writing and formatting.	Conventional but limited structure with satisfactory writing and formatting.	Conventional structure with good writing and formatting.	Conventional and well-articulated structure with very good writing and formatting.	Persuasive structure that is original with fluent writing and impeccable formatting.	Innovative structure that enhances the development of argument. Flawless writing & presentation.	Highly original structure that substantially adds to the development of argument. Flawless writing & presentation.