Capstone Project Outline

The capstone project is integrated within a three (3) credit course, PH 645. Students are required to complete the capstone following field study. Upon approval of faculty advisors, a topic of interest is chosen. Before initiating the project, students must submit a written proposal that outlines the capstone plan. This must be approved by the course coordinator. Students complete the capstone project, either individually or in pairs, progressing through a sequence of investigation, analysis and evaluation. Each student along with their faculty advisor chooses ten core competencies and three track competencies to be incorporated into the project. Students are instructed to meet with their assigned capstone faculty advisor at least three times during an academic session. At the beginning of each session the course coordinator presents a seminar and distributes a syllabus and style manual, outlining specific requirements for completing the capstone project.

Learning Objectives:

The Capstone Project allows students to:

- Work individually or collaborate in pairs with coordinator approval and complete a public health project during the time allotted.
- Choose ten core competencies and three track competencies to be incorporated into the project.
- Address a question of interest related to their field work project or site.
- Investigate a target population selected from a clinic practice or a community-based site.
- Implement or analyze the project in such a way that subsequent groups of students can build new projects based on their predecessors’ reports and findings.
- Apply the core principles of epidemiology, biostatistics, health policy and management, environmental health science, behavioral and social aspects of public health, research methodology, program evaluation, health education and other public health courses that address issues related to a specific public health topic for a defined population.
- Critically appraise the efforts of a program or study to address the needs of the target population.
- Develop critical appraisal skills in a literature review to support your hypothesis.
• Create a store of knowledge about a particular public health concern.
• Gain professional communication skills both verbal and written.
• Become familiar with a public health project including collaboration of two or more agencies.

**Requirements:**
• Write an IRB proposal if necessary.
• Meet with the advisor a minimum of three times.
• Select a specific target population and public health need particular to that population.
• Search the literature to better define the magnitude of the particular public health problem of the selected target population.
• Search the literature to determine other ways the problem is being addressed.
• Investigate the methods that a particular agency, health care site or program is using to address the need. (This may require interviews with key personnel, site visits or other investigations to fully describe the interventions that are being used to address the need.)
• Use original or existing data to support the project.
• Present the paper to be reviewed by at least two faculty members.
• Use standard form (APA) and follow the instructions presented in the style manual.

**Paper Content:**
• Abstract (350 words or less)
• Background
  • Describe/Define the Target Population
  • Describe the need of the target population and why this need was selected.
• Project Purpose: describe the purpose of the project being undertaken to address the need of the target population.
• Project Methods
  • Description of sources of information, site visits, interviews, etc.
  • Description of how the data is collected and analyzed.
  • Results of data collection and analysis (include graphs, tables, etc.)
• Conclusions
• Description of the implications of the conclusion
• Description of alternate interventions to address the problem
• Future Direction: recommendations for future areas of research

**Evaluation:**
Each capstone paper is reviewed and graded on a pass or fail basis by the faculty advisor. The oral presentation is evaluated by a capstone team composed of a minimum of two faculty members. Other faculty, students and university staff are invited to attend the presentations are also provided for students. In addition, previous capstone projects are made available for review in the PH Program office.